

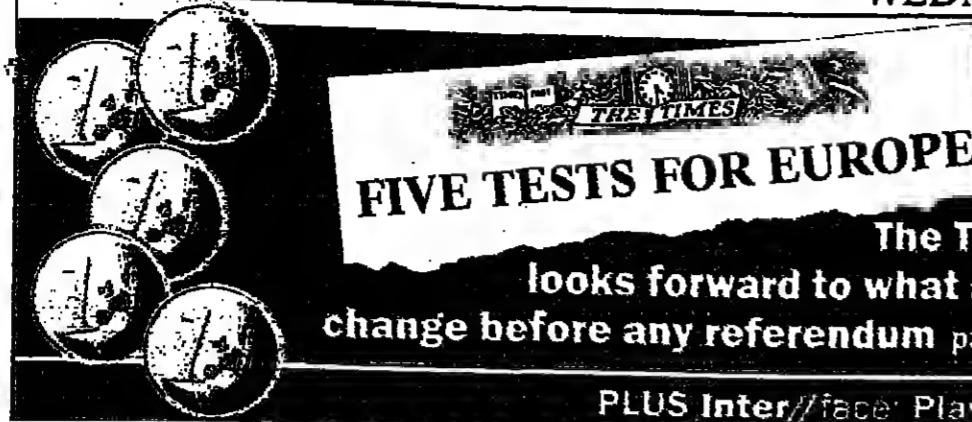
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# THE TIMES

No. 66,445

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

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FIVE TESTS FOR EUROPE  
The Times  
looks forward to what must  
change before any referendum page 21

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Sterling could vanish in five years

## Blair begins battle for the euro

By PHILIP WEBSTER  
POLITICAL EDITOR



TONY BLAIR yesterday set Britain on a course that could see the end of sterling within five years.

He prepared the stage for one of the biggest political battles of the century by launching a 30-month campaign to persuade the country that it should enter the European single currency.

In a marked shift of gear, the Prime Minister gave business the signal that it has been demanding of the Government's intent to take Britain into the euro if the economic conditions are right.

He announced that legislation is to be rushed through to enable tens of millions of pounds to be spent in each of three departments — Social Security, the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise — to make their computer systems compatible for the euro.

He outlined a timetable for British entry to the euro and the abolition of sterling considerably shorter than that being followed by the 11 European Union countries already in euroland.

Although Mr Blair insisted that British membership was not inevitable, the reaction of leading business organisations and senior pro-Europeans across the political divide confirmed that they believe he has taken his biggest step so far towards that goal. Companies had complained that Mr Blair could not expect them to

Mr Blair has given lobbyists for monetary union the signal they have long demanded

Leading article, page 21  
Debate, page 10  
Peter Riddell, Page 11  
George Galloway, page 25

stamp up the £3.5 billion needed to convert to the euro if the Government was not itself giving a stronger commitment, including the spending of cash.

As Mr Blair presented a 65-page "national changeover plan" to prepare the country for the option of going into the euro, he made plain that he would put himself at the head of the "Yes" campaign in a referendum. He told a packed and noisy Commons: "We can no longer afford to pretend either that the euro does not exist or that Britain should not actively prepare for it. Such a denial of reality does not promote Britain's interests, it betrays them."

The Prime Minister's statement exposed the continuing divisions in both the main parties over the euro, with leading Tory pro-Europeans such as

Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine ostentatiously sitting together as a group and warmly welcoming Mr Blair's words. But the Tory leadership and the large majority of Tory MPs will fight the euro up to the teeth through the next election campaign. William Hague accused the Prime Minister of committing the country to an "unnecessary, expensive and time-consuming" course of action for which the voters had never given their consent.

"Hasn't it been a remarkably short journey from this love of the pound to the plan he announced today to adopt the euro and abolish the pound?" he said, referring to a 1997 article Mr Blair wrote in *The Sun* under the headline "My love for the pound".

Mr Blair made plain that, as before, there will be no Government decision on the euro this side of a general election. But the clear expectation is that if Labour wins again, that decision will come soon afterwards, possibly in late 2001 if the general election is called in the early summer of that year.

The timetable envisaged by the plan is for a four-month referendum campaign. If the British people vote for entry there would be between two years and 30 months of intense preparation for automatic cash machines and supermarket tills to be changed, ending with the introduction of euro notes and coins. After a further period of up to six months — but possibly as short as two months — sterling notes and coin would vanish.

The plan is silent, however, on the key date at which sterling would be locked into the euro — the effective date that Britain joins the single currency. It is likely to be within a year of the referendum decision but a lengthy, unresolved argument is proceeding between the Treasury, which wants a short period to avoid

Continued on page 2, col 5

By NIGEL GLASS, IN VIENNA  
AND ELIZABETH JUDGE

A HUGE avalanche swept through an Austrian ski resort yesterday, killing at least seven people and burying up to 40 others beneath thousands of tons of snow.

Rescuers in the Tyrolean community of Galtür were frantically trying to reach the trapped as darkness fell. Several people were pulled out alive, suffering from serious injuries. Soldiers joined the hunt, but their efforts were hampered by poor weather, which prevented help being airlifted to the Paznaun Valley.

Witnesses said several snowfalls hit the town, which had been cut off for three days, al-

most simultaneously. Plumes of snow blocked out the sun and vibrations triggered falls in neighbouring resorts.

As the emergency services struggled to reach the scene near the Swiss border, radio appeals for tourists with medical experience were broadcast. Soldiers with night-sights, heat-seeking equipment and sniffer dogs were confined to their barracks by the bad weather.

The area is popular with British holidaymakers. The Foreign Office was waiting for information about possible casualties and ski companies were organising head counts of their clients in the resort.

Chris Laming, communications director of P&O Stena



Line, who has been stranded in Galtür since Friday with his wife Pauline and two children, said: "The sky went black and a huge cloud of powder snow covered the whole village. I saw people running in and out of our hotel. Terrified parents were searching for their children."

Mr Laming, from Dover, said: "The incredible thing was that there was absolutely

no sound. All we saw was the light go and this swirling powder snow crash into the hotel windows."

He said the disaster happened as ski-instructors were organising a light-hearted race in a central area called the Dorfplatz. "The slopes are closed, but they were racing inside the village and the Dorfplatz was very crowded. The spot where the avalanche hit is covered with snow many feet deep and that's where they are digging and probing with poles."

Franz Wenko, a hotel operator, said: "We were drinking hot mulled wine, when suddenly it started. The lights went out. It was dark. There was only dust and snow. We got

out of there as fast as we could."

Other avalanches have killed at least 11 people throughout Europe and hundreds of Britons are among at least 40,000 people stranded in resorts experiencing their heaviest snowfalls in living memory.

British tour operators made arrangements to transfer clients who had been due to fly to Galtür next weekend to safer resorts. Last weekend, Inguru airlifted 12 holidaymakers away because of the risk of avalanche. Britons with relatives in the area can contact the following telephone number: 0043 512 5000 2500.

Snow chaos, page 4

## Visions vie with values

Unilever makes £5bn payout

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch consumer goods company, is to return a record £5 billion to its shareholders by way of a special dividend. The company said it had no use for the cash which amounts to 10 per cent of its stockmarket value. The payout amounts to 66.15p a share. Page 25.

Race favourite put down

Bint Alayal, the favourite for the 1,000 Guineas, has been put down after suffering a leg fracture on the gallops at Kingsdown, near Lambourn. She was rated Europe's champion two-year-old filly last season. Page 43

## Lawrence family set to sue police force for damages

By MICHAEL HARVEY  
AND STEWART TENDLER

THE family of Stephen Lawrence is expected to launch an unprecedented civil action for damages against the Metropolitan Police.

Doreen and Neville Lawrence and their legal advisers have discussed a claim for negligence after reading a damning report of the police investigation into their son's murder. The judicial inquiry report is to be released today.

The Lawrences also hope that the Crown Prosecution Service will use evidence gathered at the inquiry, headed by

Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, to bring charges of perjury against the five young men accused of the killing. Mr Lawrence said yesterday: "I'm still clinging to the hope of justice. When these guys gave evidence, they were lying and I am hoping that they are going to recommend that these guys be tried for perjury. It carries a 15-year sentence. I'll be happy with that."

Last night Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, put the finishing touches to a ten-point plan to restore public confidence in his force. The project, which will combine a hearts and

minds campaign, is to be announced later today.

The proposals, described as radical, is expected to include plans for officers to wear name tags on duty so that they can be identified. The Yard is also launching training for all senior officers so that they can evaluate murder cases.

A civil action by the Lawrence family could see individual officers, many of whom are criticised heavily in the inquiry report, being sued, or Sir Paul Condon as head of the force or both. A family friend said: "No final decision has been taken."

Lewisham murder, page 5

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## Scientists develop test to identify meningitis in minutes

Early treatment of killer disease will save lives and prevent epidemics, Ian Murray reports

A SIMPLE test that can diagnose meningitis within 30 minutes at a cost of just £2 has been developed by British scientists.

The discovery represents a breakthrough in tackling the killer disease as early treatment is vital to save lives and prevent epidemics. The test shows not only if a patient is suffering from the disease but also which of the three main strains.

Vaccine is effective against only the C strain, which occurs in 25 per cent of cases. Since it takes several

days for a vaccine to be effective, the earlier contacts of the sick person are immunised the better the chance of preventing an epidemic.

In the recent outbreak at Pontypridd in South Wales it took three days to establish that group C was involved before starting the vaccination programme. With the new test it would be possible to start immunising people almost immedi-

ately. Julia Warren, of the Meningitis Research Foundation, said: "This will revolutionise diagnosis worldwide and is tremendously exciting. It has enormous public health consequences." The foundation paid £85,000 to fund the research. "This is wonderful value for money," she said.

The new method, developed by scientists at Cardiff University and

the University of Wales College of Medicine, uses equipment that can be bought for only £1,000 and costs £2 per test.

A blood sample is put through an ultrasound scanner enhancer to provide an image that can be easily read. This shows if a meningococcal disease is present and identifies which of the three main strains is involved. Because patients suffering

from suspected meningitis are immediately given antibiotics, it is almost impossible to grow a culture that will show what strain of the disease has caused the illness.

Accurate diagnosis has therefore been possible only by sending a lumbar puncture sample to a laboratory in Manchester where the DNA eventually shows what the patient has been suffering. Trials at

five hospitals in Britain and Ireland have shown that the new test is superior to traditional culture techniques and as effective as DNA tests even though it takes only a fraction of the time and can be performed by staff after very little training.

Edward Kaczmarski, head of the Public Health Laboratory Service's meningococcal reference unit, in

Manchester, said: "Knowing what strain of meningitis we are dealing with is important in the management of contacts and the identification of outbreaks."

Details of the way the new tests work are shown on *Tomorrow's World* on BBC1 tonight. Philip Monk, a public health consultant, told the programme that the ability to make an early diagnosis would allow an early intervention in an outbreak of the disease and would therefore save lives.

## MP quits over leak of report to Cook

By ROLAND WATSON, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE arms-to-Africa affair dealt another blow to Robin Cook yesterday when a Labour MP resigned from the inquiry committee after admitting he had leaked a copy of its findings to the Foreign Secretary.

Ernie Ross, MP for Dundee West, sent a draft copy of the cross-party Foreign Affairs Select Committee findings to Mr Cook four weeks before it was officially published.

Mr Ross admitted his role as Mr Cook was forced to concede in a Commons written reply that he had received a leaked copy of the report, one of the most hard-hitting and critical of a department in recent memory.

Tories on the committee had previously complained that Mr Cook appeared remarkably well briefed on the contents of the report in broadcast interviews before it was published.

Although a severe embarrassment to the Foreign Secretary, the Opposition turned their fire on one of his middle-ranking ministers, Tony Lloyd, whom they accused of misleading the Commons.

When asked last week who was the first person in the Foreign Office to see the report, Mr Lloyd side-stepped the question and answered in a written Commons reply that copies were collected on publication day. Cheryl Gillan,



Ross sent copy of draft report to Robin Cook

Tory foreign affairs spokeswoman, said that if Mr Lloyd had been aware of the leak, he should resign.

Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, said the "clear effect" of Mr Lloyd's reply had been "to mislead Parliament". He said Mr Lloyd should come to the Commons to give an immediate explanation.

Mr Ross's admission that he had acted against one of the foundations of the select committee system, that it exists to call the executive to account, failed to surprise some of his own colleagues.

During the protracted committee sessions into the Sierra Leone affair, Mr Ross was often an obstructive force to the questioning of ministers and civil servants, and once even adjourned a hearing because of the line of inquiry taken by one of the committee members.

Dennis Canavan, Labour MP for Falkirk West, said: "Ernie has at last been exposed as a Government nark. He has abrogated his responsibilities as a parliamentarian."

Mr Canavan said the episode also raised questions for Mr Cook. "Robin should have refused to accept it. He is a parliamentarian as well as a Minister."

In his statement, Mr Ross admitted he had breached the confidence of the committee, but had done so because of his concerns about the way the committee's approach.

He said: "I accept without reservation that I was wrong to do this and consequently it was right for me to resign from the committee."

"I express my sincere apologies to the committee and was very grateful for the understanding shown to me by all of them."

A Foreign Office spokesman said that after receiving the leak, the department had neither tried to interfere with the committee nor done its own leaking to the media.



Fiona Jones, MP for Newark, arriving at Nottingham Crown Court yesterday

## Visions and values

continued from page 1

this Prime Minister's approach to persuasion. The word "real" kept cropping up. We must get real. The euro is happening — like it or not. There is no opposing reality, "no going back" (in his words) "from the road to the future." The euro simply is.

This inevitable view of history sounds bold but is secretly timid, side-stepping questions of what is wise or right. "Get into what is the real world today" Blair snapped at the Tory Eurosceptic, Sir Michael Spicer.

But on the attack Blair was formidable. Answering William Hague, he derided the ten-year limit on the "no to the euro". Was the Tory position (asked Blair) to offer a ten-year guarantee on "a thousand years of history"?

Just as Blair's "if" came with a wink, so had Hague's "not for the next ten years". Blair meant "soon" and Hague meant "never". Each was easily mocked for this.

They do judge; the Eurosceptics judge too; the wish to pretend otherwise is ebbing. Yesterday the tide looked irreversible.

The Tory leader had a fine old time deriding the Prime Minister for his protestations of even-handedness, and warning the House of his real purpose. Hague's jokes were as good as ever, but beneath lay the force of conviction and a lucid argument. Three-quarters of the Tory ranks rallied with relief to this performance, and said as much in their interventions.

But a handful hated it. Sir Edward Heath was utterly dismissive. Kenneth Clarke cheerfully ignored it. Ian Taylor sounded close to snapping and Michael Heseltine sounded sad. When Sir Archie Hamilton, the chairman of the Tory backbench 1922 Committee, offered his colleagues a major middle position ("too early to judge") around which they could unite, the Eurosceptics looked uninterested.

They do judge; the Eurosceptics judge too; the wish to pretend otherwise is ebbing. Yesterday the tide looked irreversible.

Continued from page 1  
political uncertainty, and the banks and business, which want a longer time to prepare.

Treasury officials said the Government would attempt to demonstrate that it had achieved economic stability in the run-up to euro entry. They denied that this would amount to "shadowing the euro".

Mr Blair was backed by Paddy Ashdown who said the Government had "crossed the Rubicon" and urged ministers openly to make the case for the single currency. With other Tory MPs glowing beside them, Mr Heseltine, Mr Clarke and Sir Edward Heath rowed in behind the Government.

But there was also dissent from former Labour Eurosceptics with Dennis Skinner warning again experiments with "genetically-modified currencies" and Tony Benn demanding a free vote for Labour MPs and the Cabinet.

Mr Blair retorted by mocking the unlikely "Thatcher-Portillo-Benn axis" —

posed to the single currency. He added that once the decision to join the single currency had been taken, Britain could move to membership "considerably faster" than the 11 original euro-zone members. He also stressed the importance of the five economic tests the Government had set for membership being satisfied.

All businesses would need to adapt their systems to the new currency. Smaller businesses could use "off the shelf" systems, but larger firms would face "more intricate challenges".

The CBI welcomed the changeover plans but called for a clearer commitment to joining. Other business chiefs raised the issue of economic convergence, calling for a clearer signal on how the Government would get the economics right for Britain to sign up for the euro.

But Ruth Lea, head of policy at the Institute of Directors, criticised the government and said many smaller firms would face huge costs, with no return if they did not deal with Europe.

**Blair push for euro**

timepieces housed in the Royal Observatory. The sculpture, designed by the architect Crisina Garcia for £1, is a twin to the Times Millennium Sculpture unveiled last year on London's Cromwell Road.

Greenwich has been recognised worldwide as the home of time since 1884, when the International Meridian Conference fixed the precise position of longitude 0°. Dr Kristen Lipincott, director of the Royal Observatory, said: "We are delighted to welcome *The Times* to the Greenwich Meridian 2000 project. *The Times* sponsorship of the Meridian Line and the electronic news feed along the line at the Observatory reflect the crucial international importance of the Prime Meridian. The Meridian Line and *The Times* Millennium Sculpture will be focal points for the forthcoming millennium celebrations."

Planning permission for the project was granted until 2003 by Greenwich Council last week, and it will be formally launched in the spring. Building work expected to last five weeks, will begin as soon as ancient monuments permission is obtained from the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. Structural engineers are Atelier One and project management will be by Crowe and Nicholas.

## Teaching 'craft'

Teaching is a craft not a profession, the Chief Inspector of Schools said. Chris Woodhead denied the term was critical. "My aim is to rescue teachers from the culture of deference which has for too long emasculated professional confidence. Good teaching is more than that a complex of technocratic competencies," he said in the annual Oisted lecture.

## Anti-fur Bill

A Private Member's Bill to end fur farming in Britain was unveiled yesterday by Maria Eagle, Labour MP for Liverpool Garston. It has cross-party support and the backing of animal welfare groups. The Bill aims to outlaw the "cruel and barbaric" farming of animals for fur and compensate producers for the loss of their livelihoods.

## Joint force plan

RAF Harriers are to be combined with the Royal Navy's Sea Harriers as a single training and command organisation, the Defence Secretary said. Giving details of the plan, called Joint Force 2000, George Robertson said that air crews from the Navy and RAF would retain their uniforms and preserve their "sinister Service ethos".

## Jog the memory

Mice go running on an exercise wheel whenever they want to create more cells in the hippocampus, the area of the brain involved in learning and memory, say scientists at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California. It is not known if this works for humans, but more people from the institute have taken up jogging.

## Irvine defends reforms

Legal profession given warning at *Times* Law Awards

THE Lord Chancellor last night dismissed concerns that he was rushing the legal profession into radical civil justice reforms, which take effect in April.

Lord Irvine of Laird said that the draft rules for the changes, which bring in a quicker, cheaper system of civil justice, had been available since last July.

Judges will become trial managers, dictating the pace of litigation, setting strict timetables and imposing sanctions if litigants do not comply.

Some solicitors have expressed fears that they have

## Millennium sign of The Times

By MARK HENDERSON



Headline news: the Millennium sculpture

**THE TIMES** is to be the official millennium sponsor of the Prime Meridian line at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. The line of 0 degrees longitude — from which every clock in the world is set — will be marked by an electronic news feed that allows visitors to stand on the meridian and read up-to-the-minute headlines from *The Times* website. The screen will also show facts about time.

At the end of the line will stand a 2.6 metre Times Millennium Sculpture, a striking steel structure with a form that echoes the astronomical

timepieces housed in the Royal Observatory. The sculpture, designed by the architect Crisina Garcia for £1, is a twin to the Times Millennium Sculpture unveiled last year on London's Cromwell Road.

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# Snow chaos leaves 40,000 stranded

**Adrian Lee and Adam Sage in Paris report on how holiday dreams are turning into nightmares as avalanches threaten key resorts**

HUNDREDS of British holidaymakers were stranded yesterday as the worst snowfalls in living memory caused chaos in resorts throughout Europe. It was estimated that at least 40,000 people were cut off by heavy snow or the risk of avalanche.

A group of more than 50 British holidaymakers have been stranded in the Austrian resort of Lech since Saturday, unable to catch flights home.

Among them was Kenneth McKenzie, a solicitor from Chiswick, west London, his wife Jane, their three children and a schoolfriend.

Snow has been falling constantly since the middle of last week making escape from the region impossible.

According to Mr McKenzie, who was scheduled to fly home last weekend, there is a waiting list of more than 1,000 for private flights out. "The worst thing is the lack of information," he said. "It could be two days or five days before we get out. We are haemorrhaging money — there is no novelty to it at all and people are frankly fed up."

He has been faxed work by his office and homework for his children, who are pupils at St Paul's in Hammersmith.

According to the authorities in Austria, the stress of being trapped is beginning to cause "psychological tension" in some resorts.

"I have not seen any fist fights yet," said Mr McKenzie. "But it is pretty fraught at the tourist office where people are trying to get information."

With only two ski lifts out of more than 30 open, there is little opportunity to ski, he said.

The family is ready to leave at a moment's notice, and is prepared to leave luggage behind if it means getting home.

Helicopters flying injured people out for hospitalisation were yesterday bringing in food and tons of mail, which was piling up because entire villages were cut off.

Other Britons are stranded in Ischgl, in the Tyrol, and Grindelwald, in the Swiss

Alps, where supplies of fresh food have run out and diesel is being rationed.

It is feared that a massive wall of snow above Grindelwald could be dislodged at any time. Small convoys of lorries, their drivers carrying transmitters in case they are buried, were being allowed to enter the village at dawn, when the risk was at its lowest.

One British company, Powderbyrne, has hired helicopters to airlift 120 clients out of Grindelwald.

Thousands of people are stranded in other Swiss resorts and helicopters were being used to fly British tourists into St Moritz to begin holidays.

In the Chamonix area in France most runs were closed and some holidaymakers were returning home complaining that they had been unable to ski for the majority of their stay.

"It is a complete nightmare," said Natasha Wright, a representative with Ski Weekend, which was using vans to take clients to other resorts where conditions were better. There they faced queues of more than two hours for lifts.

In Holland, the Government has advised people not to take skiing holidays.

"There hasn't been this much snow in 50 years," said Bas Kuik, a spokesman for the Dutch tourist board. It would be the first time the board had advised people to keep away from Austria, Switzerland and France, he said.

But British companies said they had no plans to suspend operations. Many were frankly switching clients away from the worst hit resorts.

A spokesman for the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) said that only a handful of people had cancelled holidays because of the increased avalanche risk.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office warned Britons to ensure that they had adequate insurance cover and to be aware of the risks of skiing off piste.

The Ski Club of Great Britain said that improved equipment for skiing and snowboarding was encouraging inexperienced people to be over adventurous.

Skis with wider ends and tips, and snowboards, have enabled relative novices to become reasonably accomplished more quickly than in the past and tempted them to seek the thrill of powder skiing off piste before they have sufficient experience.

It also suggested that skiers carry transmitters where there

was a possibility of avalanche and not to rely on mobile telephones to call for help.

In Chamonix French ski guides said that they knew that a large part of their clientele was drawn to the area by the promise of off-piste skiing and snowboarding and would go elsewhere if this was banned permanently.

Also, the 120,000 people employed by French ski resorts created a lobby group in favour of keeping the slopes open that is difficult for the French Government or local politicians to resist.

Thousands of people, most of them tourists, are stranded at the ski resorts of Klosters and Davos in eastern Switzerland where the maximum avalanche alert is in effect, local authorities said yesterday.

Road and rail access to the Swiss resorts has been blocked and the ski stations cut off with 26 roads impassable in the canton of Grisons.

Transport by helicopter has not been possible due to bad weather conditions.

In the Evolene region in the southern Swiss canton of Valais, dual avalanches on Sun-

day night are feared to have killed 10 people after destroying nine chalets.

The bodies of two men in their twenties were found in a car, but eight others — including two French families — are still missing and the chances of finding them are increasing, according to rescuers.

During Monday in the Valais, an avalanche reportedly hit every 20 minutes.

Along the swollen Rhine River, meanwhile, the first sand-

southern Germany, stranding tens of thousands of passengers at train stations and freezing traffic on the autobahns.

The city of Aachen, on the border with Belgium and The Netherlands, was cut off for hours after ten inches of snow fell overnight. Meteorologists called it the area's deepest snow of the century.

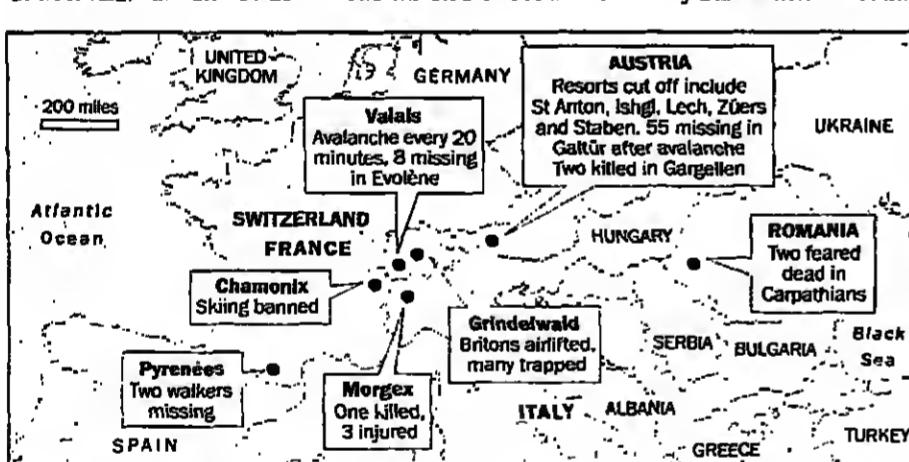
Heavy snowfalls followed by rain had flooded thousands of acres of Romanian farmland and cut off northwestern villages, local media said last night.

The independent Mediafax

ANDY NETTLER / REUTERS



Workers shovel snow from a roof in Klosters yesterday. Unusually heavy snowfalls in the Alps have triggered catastrophic avalanches and left many villages cut off



## Courts try to curb off-piste thrill-seekers

**Heavy falls and warm weather maximising the dangers, writes Adam Sage in Paris**

WITH more than 20 people, including six Britons, killed in the French Alps alone since the start of the year, this holiday season is one of the deadliest on record.

Michel Daloz, a forecaster with the French weather office, Météo France, said "extreme conditions" were to blame.

"Usually we could expect about one metre of snow since the beginning of the season at an altitude of 2,000 metres (6,560ft) in the Alps. This year we have had three metres of snow. That only happens every decade or so."

"But we have also had high winds and spells of warm weather which have made the snow deeply unstable and provoked a maximum risk of avalanches. That is absolutely exceptional. And elsewhere in Europe it

has been even worse than in France."

M Daloz said conditions would improve slightly towards the end of this week and then deteriorate.

But the weather is only part of the explanation for the high death rate in the mountains across Europe. The growing popularity of skiing holidays is another.

The number of foreign holidaymakers who head for the French Alps has increased from \$40,000 in 1987 to an estimated 1.6 million this year. Among them are more than 50,000 Britons. About 900,000 French tourists will stay in Alpine

resorts this winter. French police say the result is an inevitable increase in fatal accidents since "there is no such thing as a risk-free mountain".

However, the attraction of off-piste activities, notably snowboarding, has added to the death rate, since these pursuits often take holidaymakers on to slopes prone to avalanches.

One survey in France reported that up to 30 per cent of skiers and snowboarders were tempted to leave official pistes in pursuit of excitement and freedom.

The French authorities have tried to crack down, making it a criminal offence to wander off piste. Yet their

difficulties were illustrated on Monday by the weakness of the case against three Britons who told a French court that they stumbled by accident onto a slope that had been closed in Val d'Isère.

The holidaymakers face fines of Fr5,000 (£510) if found guilty of endangering the lives of their rescuers.

Elsewhere the authorities have tried to reduce risks by closing popular resorts. But with winter holidays generating Fr40 billion for the French economy there is pressure to keep open the pistes.

Joel Eeckout, a town hall official in Praz de Lys in the French Alps, said that the Britons among the 5,000 tourists caught in his resort since Saturday had abandoned the slopes. "They are playing cards. I think they are having a very good

time and I think they will come back." French officials are caught between the conflicting demands of a powerful tourist industry and the acute need to impose safety on popular mountain slopes. It is a dilemma they have been unable to resolve.

Earlier this month, for instance, the prefecture of the Haute-Savoie in the French Alps took the unprecedented step of making it temporarily a criminal offence to go off piste.

But it had to back down as ski-lift operators and mountain guides in the town of Chamonix threatened to strike in protest.

Police in Chamonix say one way of reducing fatal accidents is for tourists to seek better information on the prevailing weather conditions. Too often, officers say, holidaymakers ignore safety warnings and the risks.

news agency said an avalanche had swept away the two Czechs, who had left their group to take a different route on the snowbound Muntele Mic mountain on Sunday.

Snowstorms over the past two days had prevented rescuers from searching for the bodies, it said.

Heavy snows cut off hundreds of villages on the northern border with Ukraine, as well.

Rains and a quick thaw on

the western border with Hungary flooded tens of villages and swamped hundreds of acres of land under various crops.

The Romanian Defence Ministry said that it had sent troops with rubber boats to evacuate villagers from a flooded area where soldiers were also helping the population to raise dikes on local rivers.

Meteorologists are predicting more rain and snow throughout the week.

In Finland rescuers called off search operations overnight, amid reports that an avalanche in the ski resort of Ylläs may not have claimed any victims after all.

On Monday reports had indicated eight people were missing. But investigations using heat-detecting cameras had found no sign of bodies, the STT/FNB news agency said yesterday.

In Hungary hundreds of families were evacuated after their homes collapsed due to snow melting after weeks of cold weather, while authorities in the east of the country are preparing for heavy flooding, officials said.



A tourist carries his daughter from a helicopter after being airlifted from an avalanche zone yesterday

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# Black murder victim's family support police

By STEPHEN FARRELL

TWO miles from the place where Stephen Lawrence died, a far more thorough investigation has begun into the suspicious death of another young black man.

Detectives have confirmed that they are treating as murder the death of Sheldon Bobb, a 21-year-old lifeguard, who was found dying from head injuries outside his house in Lewisham, southeast London.

Within 40 minutes of the alarm being raised on Sunday afternoon, police had sealed off the scene and were conducting house-to-house inquiries. They have not ruled out a racial attack and say that they are keeping an "open mind" about possible motives.

Kerry Runacre, 19, the mother of one of Mr Bobb's two children, said that she thought the



Sheldon Bobb found dying outside his home

family yesterday joined Detective Chief Inspector Chris Horne, who is leading the investigation, at Shooters Hill police station, on the road where Stephen Lawrence was murdered.

Mr Bobb's mother, Glynis Brewster, 43, said: "Sheldon was a loving son and as a person he was very passionate about justice, so if anybody knows anything at all it is really important to be brave or concerned enough to share what you know so that we can have some justice for himself."

Mr Horne said that he believed the attack was carried out with a blunt instrument, but said that no weapon, witnesses or suspects had yet been found. He said that Mr Bobb was "popular", had no known enemies, and no criminal record.

Neighbours called an ambulance upon finding Mr Bobb,

and hospital staff contacted police after becoming suspicious about his head injury and body bruising. An autopsy found that he died from shock and bleeding, and that his injuries were not consistent with a fall or car accident. Mr Horne

was acutely aware of the timing of the inquiry, explained in detail police actions during the first days of the investigation and confirmed that he had spoken to Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve, the racial task force and intelligence experts about trying to match the

attack to other crimes in the racially mixed area.

He said that Mr Bobb was found at 2.45pm on Sunday, and that the hospital alerted police at 3.06pm. Police arrived at the scene about 3.23pm, sealed it off and began house-to-house inquiries.

Letters, page 21

## Any minister guilty of leak will be sacked

By ROLAND WATSON AND MICHAEL HARVEY

A minister found to be responsible for leaking the Stephen Lawrence report will be immediately sacked, Downing Street said yesterday. "The Prime Minister would not countenance a minister doing that," Mr Blair's official spokesman said.

Downing Street gave its warning less than 24 hours after Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, had refused to clear his ministerial team of involvement and failed to say if the culprit would be dismissed if unmasked.

David Omand, the Home Office Permanent Secretary, has begun his internal inquiry into the affair, which saw an injunction being served on *The Sunday Telegraph* on Saturday night, and then lifted on Sunday.

Kate Hoey, the junior Home Office minister with responsibilities for the Metropolitan Police, contacted Mr Omand's office yesterday to inform him that she had not seen a copy of the report.

Paul Boateng, the Minister of State at the Home Office, who, with a select band of senior civil servants in the department, did receive one of the few copies, yesterday avoided

the issue of the leak. At Euston station in London for the launch of a helpline for runaways, he was asked what he would be telling Mr Omand. He smiled and made no comment before leaving.

Mr Omand is also believed to have been told that Lord Williams of Mostyn, the other Minister of State in the Home Office, did not receive a copy.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said that the issues raised by the report, which is officially published today, are wide-ranging.

The report will accuse the Metropolitan Police of "institutional racism". Mr Ashdown said that racism was endemic in Britain, and not confined to institutions such as the police.

He said that it would be "a great mistake" if the report was seen as highlighting problems that were exclusively problems for the police. "Racism exists in every part of our society," he said in a speech to mark the Commission for Racial Equality's "leadership challenge".

Stephen Lawrence died, at least in part, because we have not been sufficiently vigilant against racism.



Mr Bobb's sister, Sherry-Ann, and his mother, Glynis Brewster. "He was passionate about justice." Mrs Brewster said

## No charges over death at private prison

By RICHARD FORD  
HOME CORRESPONDENT

SEVEN officers at a privately run jail will not be prosecuted for manslaughter over the death of a black prisoner. The Crown Prosecution Service said last night there was no realistic prospect of a conviction.

Alton Manning, 33, a prisoner at HMP Belmarsh, near Redditch, died in 1995 after being put in a headlock during a struggle when officers removed him from his cell. Last year an inquest jury returned a unanimous verdict that he was unlawfully killed at the prison, run by United Kingdom Detention Services.

He was on remand accused of malicious wounding and illegal possession of a firearm. The seven officers were suspended after the inquest verdict and will remain away from duty until a Prison Service inquiry is completed.

Raju Bhatt, solicitor for Mr Manning's family, said that a formal complaint had been lodged with West Mercia police about the conduct of the investigation into the death.

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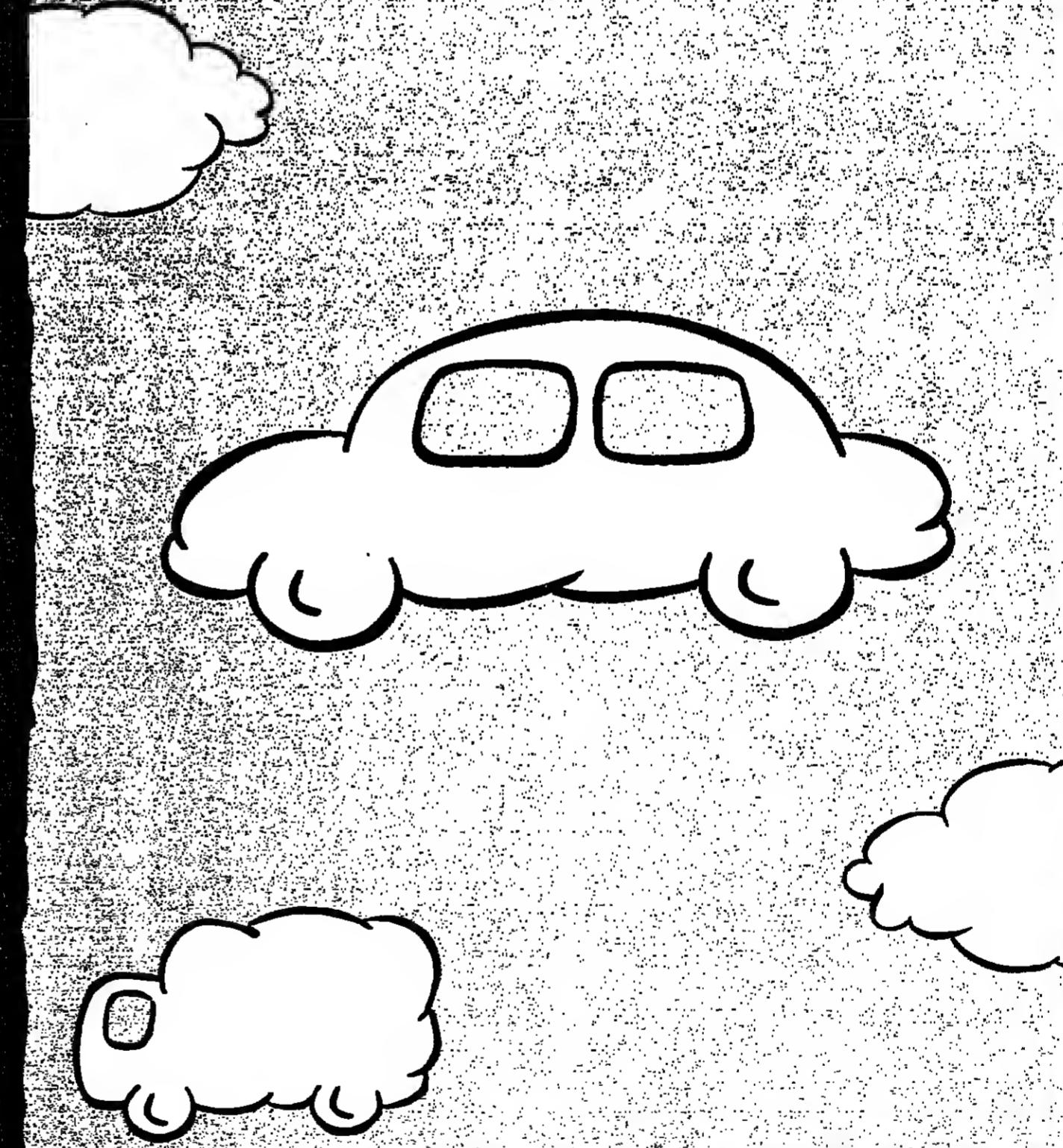
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\$100,000 - \$249,999	Monthly	5.05	5.20	4.60	4.70
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# Local poll backs big council tax rise

By MARK HENDERSON

A LABOUR council is to raise council tax by more than twice the maximum recommended by the Government after winning the approval of voters in a local referendum.

Householders in Milton Keynes will pay 9.8 per cent more council tax next year after supporting the unitary authority's spending plans in a telephone and postal ballot. Almost 70 per cent voted for the 4.8 per cent rise or an even steeper rise of 15 per cent. Only 31 per cent supported a lower rise of 5 per cent.

The turnout of 44.7 per cent dwarfed the 26 per cent at the last local elections. The 66,647 who voted made the poll the largest local consultation in Britain.

Milton Keynes is one of a number of councils to ignore guidance from John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, that council tax should not rise by more than 4.5 per cent. Several Home Counties authorities are proposing double-figure increases, including neighbouring Buckinghamshire with 13.4 per cent.

Although Mr Prescott has said he will not flinch from punishing profligate councils, it would be difficult for him to cap Milton Keynes as the Prime Minister has said that



Wilson: said the vote delivered a clear verdict

he sees local referendums as part of the future of local government. Councils seeking big tax rises ought to seek a direct mandate from their residents, Tony Blair wrote in a Fabian Society pamphlet last year.

Hilary Armstrong, Local Government Minister, said that the Government wanted to make it easier for councils to hold local referendums. "We intend to legislate to put powers to hold referendums on a firmer footing," she said.

Milton Keynes Council and the Electoral Reform Society, which ran the ballot, will be compiling a report and holding a Local Government Association seminar about the vote.

Kevin Wilson, the council leader, said: "We are proud of our innovation and the extent of the turnout. The people of Milton Keynes are used to innovation and they have delivered a clear verdict."

He said that Alan Meale, the Environment Minister, had "saluted" their plans and that the Government would be wrong to cap in defiance of voters' wishes.

The referendum proved that local voters were prepared to pay more to preserve key services, Mr Wilson said. Many council tax-payers had complained before the poll that the votes of those who did not pay, such as students and the unemployed, could force through a big increase but such fears proved wide of the mark.

While about 15 per cent of the residents, less than the national average, get a council tax rebate or pay nothing, 32 per cent of those eligible to vote supported large rises.

Opposition councillors said that the £70,000 spent on the referendum was a waste of money and had obtained a spurious mandate for a proposal that would otherwise have been voted through by councillors at no extra cost.



They're off: Jackie Ballard's constituents at Taunton racecourse decry her views on hunting but admit that she is a "rather good MP"

## Outsider in the Lib Dem race could surprise the favourites

**James Landale meets the blunt-speaking MP likely to be the only woman contender to succeed Paddy Ashdown**

**J**ackie Ballard would appear from her curriculum vitae to embody all things Liberal Democrat. The MP for Taunton is a former lecturer, social worker, and council leader who studied psychology at the London School of Economics. She is pro-European Union and believes there should be a royal commission on drug abuse.

Whatever the image, the reality of this potential candidate to succeed Paddy Ashdown as party leader is more paradoxical.

Mrs Ballard, 46, opposes hunting with a passion, yet in 1997 took from the Tories a constituency staffed with followers of the hounds. She was recruited to the Liberal Party in 1985 by Mr Ashdown himself, yet has vocally opposed her mentor on several issues. She is an egalitarian who nevertheless backs positive discrimination to get more women into politics. She is on a diet — "three stone down, three to go" — and is a vegetarian who used to sit on the usually carnivorous Commons catering committee.

The common thread is a decisiveness and adherence to principle. As one colleague says: "Jackie may look cuddly, but she has sharp edges." In her own typically blunt words, she has "balls".

At Taunton races the locals in their tweeds and trilbies privately decry her views on hunting but respected the courage of her convictions. "She is also a good MP," they admitted. Like all

the potential leadership candidates, Mrs Ballard has made no firm declaration of her intentions. Away in Mexico when Mr Ashdown announced that he was to retire in the summer, she was greeted on her return with calls to stand. "I was overwhelmed by the range of support," she says. She is giving the matter serious consideration.

Were she to stand, she insists, it would be no token gesture to gain women in the party more prominence, nor to put a marker down for the next leadership election. "I wouldn't stand for anything unless it was to win. I would stand because I had something to say: I wouldn't do it just to put up a good show."

"I have been underestimating in the past and people have lived to regret it."

On the central issue of whether Lib Dem co-operation with Labour should go beyond constitutional matters, her stance is simple: she opposes it. In November she was one of four on the party's federal executive to vote against Co-operation should only reach into other areas once the constitutional programme is complete: when

there is proportional representation at Westminster.

"If we are too closely tied in with the Government on anything other than constitutional issues, we risk being less effective in opposing them and in getting our message across. I don't want people to be confused by the differences between the Liberal Democrats and Labour. I don't think we got elected round here by being wishy-washy or middle of the road."

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she is giving the matter serious consideration.

These have been Mrs Ballard's concerns since she was a girl. Born in Scotland to a woodcutter and a nurse, she was brought up in Wales, a scholarship girl among the more well-off pupils at a Monmouth boarding school, where she was a self-confessed troublemaker. The young Jacqueline Mackenzie's favourite book was Zola's *Germinat*: the vivid portrayal of poverty and injustice stays with her today.

Her marriage to Derek Ballard ended in 1989. Their daughter, 19, is a photography student. For relaxation, the MP listens to Celtic rock music and swims daily.

Ashdown's plan to make it party policy that neighbourhood trusts should take control of schools from local authorities. She failed to persuade the party to support plans to ensure at least half of all constituencies had women on their candidate shortlists.

Mrs Ballard suggests that the type of leader the party needs now is someone who will articulate the difference between us and Labour but also adopt a more collegiate leadership — less a one-man band". Were she leader, policy would not change, but there would be more emphasis on redistribution of wealth, fighting injustice and protecting the environment.

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### MPs urge speed cut on rural roads

Speed limits on country roads should be cut to 40mph to reduce the number of fatal accidents, MPs said yesterday.

Fifty MPs signed a Commons motion calling for an end to 60mph limits. Some campaigners are also pressing for 20mph zones in villages and the creation of "quiet lanes" on which cyclists, pedestrians and horse-riders would have priority over cars.

Of the 3,599 road deaths last year, 1,938 occurred on minor roads, almost all of which are in the countryside. Ministers are reviewing speed restrictions, but are nervous about imposing low speed limits in remote areas where effective enforcement would stretch police resources.

#### Midnight Monet

The Royal Academy of Arts will open overnight on Saturday, April 17, to cope with public demand on the last weekend of the *Monet in the 20th Century* exhibition. A record 210,000 visitors have already seen the show.

#### £17,000 jersey

The red jersey worn by Roger Hunt when he raised the World Cup in 1966 sold for £17,250. Hunt had swapped his England shirt with his West German opposite number, Gordon Moteshino, 44, who was at the final, bought the jersey at Sotheby's.

#### Runaway help

A free advice line has been set up for the 40,000 children who run away from home each year. The London-based service, run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, is open from 5pm to 11pm on 0800 096 0096. It is hoped that it will become nationwide.

#### Tourist record

A record 25.7 million foreign tourists visited Britain last year, spending £12.74 billion. The number from the US and Canada rose 12 per cent, compensating for a 1 per cent fall in those from the Continent, said the National Office of Statistics.

#### Laid to rest

A "silent" road surface costing £2.6 million is to be put on the M65 between Burnley and Huddersfield, Lancashire, to protect owls. Conservationists said that owls hunted by listening to the movement of prey and traffic noise was driving them away.

#### Wild at art

A painting by an elephant fetched £500 at a Sotheby's auction. The work, described as abstract, was painted by an elephant at an animal hospital in Thailand after it was given a brush by a visiting artist. The proceeds will go to charity.

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## Strike may shut British Library

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

BOOK delivery staff at the British Library have voted for a strike which would force the building's levels so that they do not spend their entire day on the lowest floors. The changes would also allow the library to extend the reading rooms' opening hours, which are fewer than on the former site in Bloomsbury.

About 100 of the 120 staff who work in the storerooms of the £11 million building supported the strike plan, which is in protest at pay, a new rota system and working conditions which they say are unhealthy. The library will be closed from March 1 for at least a week unless an agreement is reached.

Staff say that the basement storerooms, four floors below ground, have health and safety problems: they have complained about noise, extremes of temperature, lack of natural light and ladders with missing steps which they have to climb to reach high shelves.

"There is also concern about people getting migraines," said one worker, who claimed that an internal health and safety report found 37 recommendations for improvement.

Staff are also unhappy with plans to reorganise their working hours, which will introduce a series of shifts and rota in that not all are working

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## THE € DEBATE

# Hague accuses 'foolish' Blair of ditching pound

By JAMES LANDALE  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WILLIAM HAGUE accused Tony Blair of using the National Changeover Plan to bounce Britain into joining a single European currency as MPs debated the Prime Minister's statement.

The Tory leader said it was "a long list of clichés and verbiage" accompanied by little information. He mocked Mr Blair for an article "My love for the Pound" which he wrote for *The Sun* before the general election.

"Hasn't it been a remarkably short journey from this love of the pound to the plan you announced today to adopt the euro and abolish the pound?" he asked.

Mr Hague said: "While [Mr Blair] trumpets his love for the pound, it is his love for the euro which is the love that dare not speak its name."

He told the Prime Minister: "Isn't it the case that you have today committed the country to a course of action that is unnecessary, expensive and time-consuming, and for which the British voters have never given their consent?"

He added: "Isn't it foolish to embark on a changeover plan without the faintest idea how the necessary convergence of the economies is to be achieved?"

Mr Hague declared: "Instead of giving people the choice, your National Changeover Plan is part of a national handover plan, to hand over the economic and political freedoms of this country."

**'It is a handover plan, to hand over the economic and political freedoms of this country'**

which you have said this afternoon, I welcome that." He urged the Prime Minister to carry out the preparations as "speedily as possible".

Mocking his front bench's "pseudo arguments" against the euro, he insisted: "The fact is that all of these are domin-

crossed the Rubicon." He insisted: "Unless the Government is prepared to come forward now and argue the case for the euro, then it risks this decision, the most important facing the UK, being lost by stealth. Now the Government is going to have to defend its own position — something it has not done before."

Kenneth Clarke, the former Tory Chancellor, told the Prime Minister: "I welcome the marked change of tone which today's statement represents. I particularly welcome the fact that you have reached agreement with the representatives of the majority of British business on the practical steps that are now to be taken to give some reality to your policy of 'prepare and decide'."

Michael Heseltine (C, Herne), the former Deputy Prime Minister, said the changeover plan would be "widely welcomed" and marked a "step forward in the Government's intention to join the single currency". He also urged Mr Blair to create and lead an all-party group pushing for entry to the euro.

Ian Taylor (C, Esher and Walton), a former Tory minister, also welcomed the plan and added: "Any one who opposes the national changeover plan must in fact wish not to have a referendum because the referendum can only come if the British people have prepared."

Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bassetlaw) spoke of the failures of Europe's common agricultural and fisheries policies and warned Mr Blair: "Beware of those carrying out experiments in genetically modified currencies."

John Taylor (UUP, Strangford) warned that the euro was politically driven and would lead to a United States of Europe. "The Prime Minister's statement could be the beginning of the end of the United Kingdom," he said.



Tony Blair announcing the details of the National Changeover Plan for joining the European single currency in the House of Commons yesterday

## 'Not a change of policy, but change of gear'

*THIS is an edited version of the Prime Minister's statement to the Commons*

"On 27 October 1997 the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he would publish details of how, should it choose to do so, Britain could join the euro. Today we publish an outline of [the National Changeover Plan] as a basis for consultation."

"[The Chancellor] said that in principle the Government was in favour of Britain joining a successful single currency. And he set out the conditions necessary to satisfy our national economic interest."

"It is conditional. It is not inevitable. Both intention and conditions are genuine. This is the right course for the country, to resolve this issue for the British national interest, the future of our people and their well-being. And it is that national interest that will always come first."

"I do not dismiss the constitutional or political issues. They are real. Monetary union is a big step of integration. But so was the Single European Act. And the EU itself."

"And if joining a single currency is good for British jobs and British industry, if it enhances British power and

**BLAIR'S STATEMENT**

British influence, I believe it is right for Britain to overcome these constitutional and political arguments and the fears behind them."

"For the very reason of the sensitivity of these arguments, we have also said clearly: the Government can recommend. But the people will decide in a referendum."

Mr Blair continued: "What we announced today, therefore, is not a change of policy. It is a change of gear."

"The euro is a reality. It exists. Eleven out of 15 other EU members are in it. It represents 20 per cent of world income, as big as the US. It will be the currency of 290 million people."

"Fifty per cent of our trade now is with the eurozone. The launch of the euro means already that an increasing number of UK firms are starting to use the euro, not just big business like British Steel or Ford or Philips or ICI and Unilever."

Mr Blair added: "The public sector will give a clear sign of its commitment to prepare. Each department now has a minister responsible for

euro preparations. Where computer systems are being upgraded, all departments will build in euro compatibility where that represents value for money. In the case of the DSS, the Inland Revenue and Customs, the scale and complexity of their computer systems make advance preparations critical."

"They may need to spend some money prior to a referendum to make their IT systems euro-compatible ... such expenditure ... will amount to some tens of millions of pounds spread over a number of years."

"Overall, we believe it should be possible to move in four months from a Government decision to a referendum; in 24-30 months from a positive referendum result to the introduction of notes and coins; and a further six months before sterling notes and coins are withdrawn."

"This means that the whole process from a positive referendum result to the withdrawal of sterling could be completed in around three years, considerably faster than the period required for the first wave of EMU participants."

Mr Blair went on: "It is worth summarising the economic tests the Chancellor set out: sustainable convergence between the UK and countries within the euro-zone; flexibility to adapt to change in the UK and in continental Europe; the impact on investment and the UK financial services industry; and whether joining the single currency would be good for employment."

"Three points should be emphasised. The first is that economic convergence must be not momentary but, as far as we can accurately foresee, sustainable. We cannot say that yet."

"The second point is that these are early days for the euro itself. It is sensible to see how it settles down and how the ECB steers a path consistent with both strong economic discipline and the avoidance of deflation."

"And third, it will take some time to make a clear judgment about whether the direction of economic reform in Europe will enable us to meet the tests, particularly on flexibility and jobs."

"The single currency alone won't make Europe prosperous. The single currency plus fundamental reform in labour, capital and product markets and in our welfare systems, can do so."

"Madam Speaker, I commend this statement to the House."

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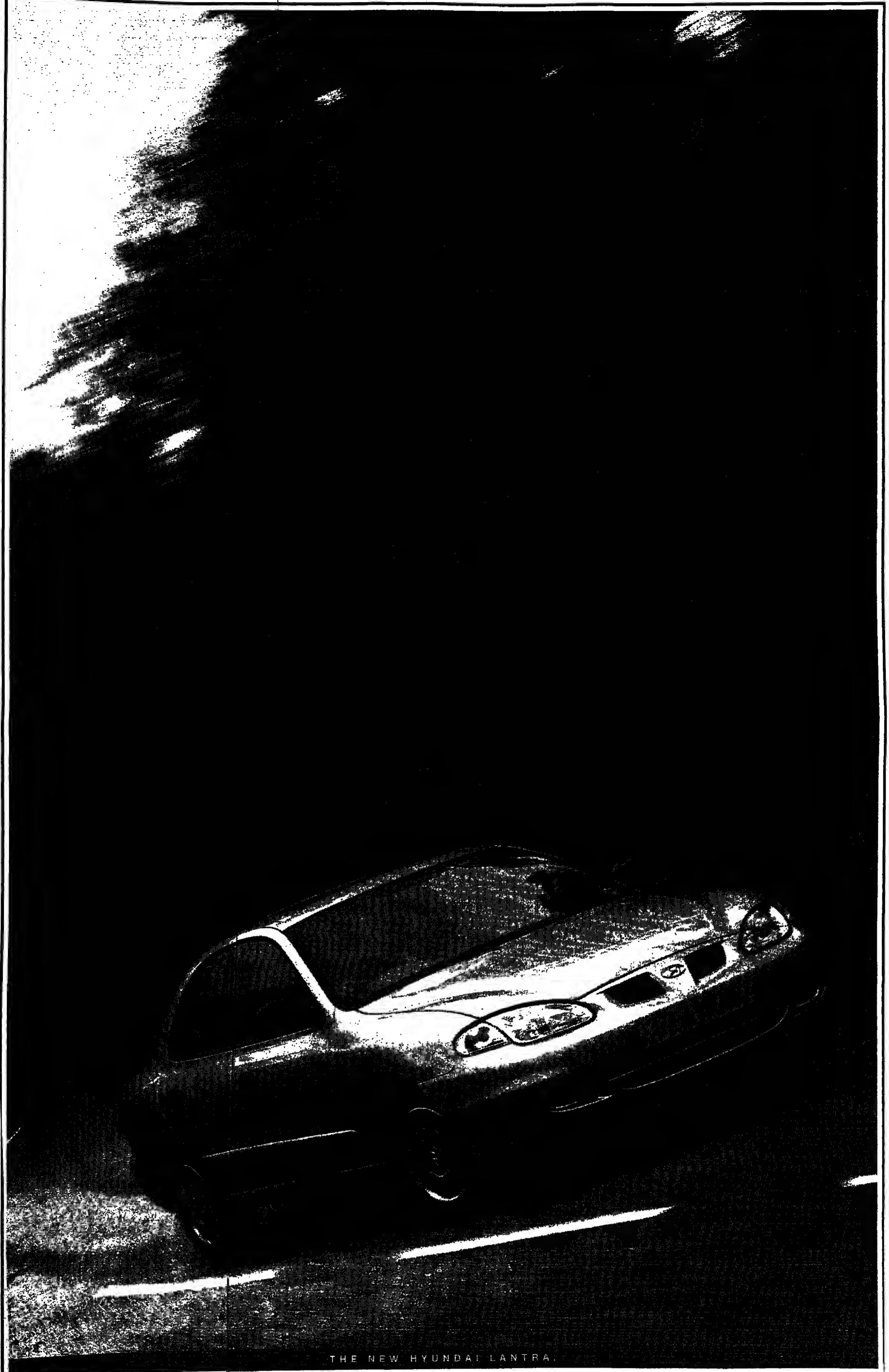
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# Serb death shows reality of ceasefire

BUKOS is a pimple of a village that does not even appear on the map. Yet, while international mediators in Rambouillet agonised over how best to window-dress deadlock to the waiting world, the war visited its 800 inhabitants.

The skirmish there was barely significant, even by the standards of Kosovo's low-intensity conflict. Doubtless the handful of casualties would have been little more than statistics on an official release were it not for the presence of the media.

Kosovo, technically, slumbers under a ceasefire that is supposed to last for the duration of Rambouillet's negotiations. On Monday morning, however, a Serb offensive west of Vučitrn, about 21 miles north of Pristina, displaced more than 4,000 refugees in four hours of fighting.

The same night, Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas came down from the snow-covered slopes and fired on Serb houses in Bukos, two miles to the south. One Serb civilian was

**Peace talks give Kosovo village a taste of war,**  
**Anthony Loyd**

in Bukos writes

killed and two others seriously wounded. Early yesterday, the mixed Serb-Albanian village filled with Serb police who escorted a team of investigators to the dead man's house while a small Yugoslav Army unit, backed by a tank and mortar crew, took up positions on the slopes to the south.

The KLA held positions to the west, north and east. They dropped a mortar round into the yard of the dead man's house as the Serb investigators entered. It wounded five policemen and a press photographer.

The police called up army re-



with the tank, and chaos descended in about two seconds. The sky and fields resounded with whistles, buzzes, cracks and thumps. Everyone appeared to be rolling around in the snow and mud. Our Land Rover picked its moment to slide gently off the track, sinking up to its axles in half-frozen slime.

We cursed and sweated and pushed, to no avail, as the bedlam continued. About 20 minutes later the shooting had stopped and I was smoking a Lucky Strike with a Serb officer. "So who is guilty today then, comrade, the Albanians or us?" he asked.

Around him, troops were regrouping in the good-natured mood that follows victory. The KLA, true to form, had fallen away from the slopes.

Bukos, in its entry to war, a tiny place on an average day, had its anonymity lifted by one dead and several wounded Serbs, together with an unknown number of guerrilla casualties. And that was during a ceasefire.

The infantry moved forward



A Serb woman, whose husband was killed outside their house in Bukos, carries her belongings, including a rifle and shotgun, from the building yesterday

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## Escape route mined

Pristina: Yugoslav Army engineers have placed explosives on a key bridge on the main highway connecting Kosovo's capital, Pristina, with the Macedonian border, according to a monitor with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe yesterday.

He said he witnessed about 20 army engineers burying a command cable of the sort that would be used to detonate explosive charges. The cable ran from a hut that was being fortified on the Pristina side of the bridge to the span itself.

An American diplomat with long experience in Yugoslavia said he understood the bridge was mined. "We have been reliably informed that the bridge is mined and could be blown at any time," he said.

A Western diplomat in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia said: "The Yugoslav Army wouldn't be a match for Nato but they would use every means to frustrate an attack, including blowing up bridges and tunnels that Nato forces would want to use to enter Kosovo."

The bridge wired for detonation would be the main escape route for monitors. (Reuters)

## British troops on hold during talks stalemate

By TOM WALKER IN RAMBOUILLET AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

THE Rambouillet peace talks on Kosovo passed the final deadline without a deal yesterday, with neither Albanians nor Serbs signing anything.

Contest Group insisters claimed, however, that there had been an historic breakthrough. A new constitution for Kosovo appeared to have been agreed, but Belgrade was still a long way from accepting a Nato force on its territory.

It was agreed that the talks should continue on Monday, March 15, at the Normandy town of Evreux. James Rubin, the US State Department spokesman, said the interval would give the Albanians time to consult their people, while the Serbs would have to bring themselves to accept that international troops were an inevitable consequence of any peace deal.

Last night, the planned deployment of 2,000 British troops in Skopje, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was postponed, following the announcement in Rambouillet. Troops from the proposed leading British armoured battle group, based on the King's Royal Hussars, had been due to arrive in the region by the end of this week to prepare for immediate deployment into Kosovo once a peace deal was signed.

However, with the inconclusive result of the talks, Operation Agricola, the British codename for the planned Kosovo mission, has been "put on hold". Only hours before the announcement that another meeting had been fixed, George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said that the 2,000 British troops would be arriving in the Greek port of Salónica and in Skopje by the end of the week.

However, after hasty meetings at the Ministry of Defence, the deployments were shelved. The troops involved, all based at Osnabrück and Münster in northern Germany, will continue to make preparations for a Kosovo mission, but without any firm guarantee that approval will be given. The first batch of tanks and armoured combat vehicles is due to arrive at Salónica on board the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ferry, *Sea Centurion*, tomorrow.

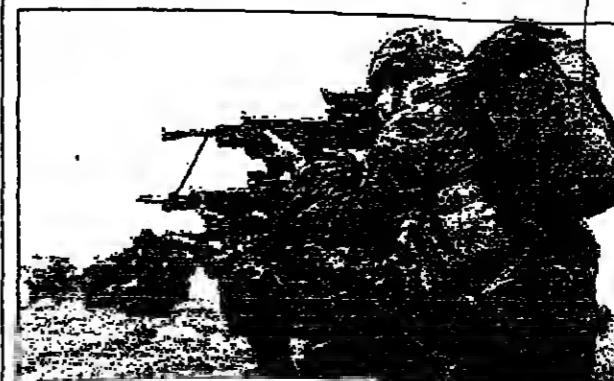
The reputation of Madeline Albright, the US Secretary of State, has taken a beating over the past few days as her efforts to secure an Albanian signature to at least half the peace plan were consistently thwarted by Hashim Thaci, the 29-year-old Kosovo Liberation Army leader. However, she said last night: "We have

troops would only be committed to Kosovo under Nato leadership. The Americans said they would also only contribute troops if they were Nato-led.

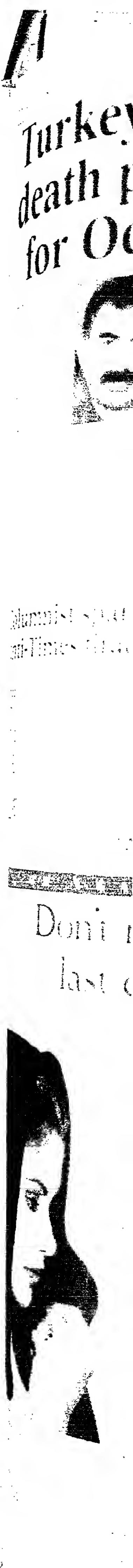
Mr Cook said: "We wanted a tried and trusted command structure." He added that he hoped Russian troops would join, making the force more palatable to Belgrade.

Hubert Vedrine, the French Foreign Minister, denied that the Albanians had persuaded the Rambouillet mediator to include a referendum in the constitution, which would provide a clear route to independence after three years.

Mrs Albright denied the Kosovo Albanians had been cheated by Rambouillet. "Do not despair, support those of your leaders who have supported peace, and America will stand with you," she said.



British Nato troops train in the snow in Skopje



# Turkey seeks death penalty for Ocalan

FROM RICHARD OWEN  
IN ISTANBUL

JUST over a week after his capture by Turkish special forces in Nairobi, Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish separatist leader, yesterday made his first appearance before Turkish judges on charges of treason.

Turkish prosecutors said they would seek the death penalty, which has not been applied in Turkey since 1964. The hearing, on the prison island of Imrali, in the Sea of Marmara, was closed to the press and public. No date was set for the trial, which will be conducted by a special session of the Ankara State Security Court.

However, officials said it would almost certainly begin next month in the run-up to the Turkish general election in April. A high security courtroom is being constructed on the island which officials said was "along the lines of courtrooms in Italy for Mafia trials", with a special bullet-proof dock for Mr Ocalan.

Yesterday's hearing on Imrali was attended by Osman Baydemir, one of fifteen lawyers from the Turkish Human



Ocalan: press banned from court appearance

Rights Association who have volunteered to defend Mr Ocalan. Dutch and Italian lawyers claiming to represent the Kurdish leader have been refused entry to Turkey. Onlookers spat and yelled abuse at Mr Baydemir as he boarded a boat for Imrali. He expressed concern that Mr Ocalan's interrogation had been conducted without a lawyer present.

Details of the interrogation have been released by the newspaper *Hürriyet*, which yesterday said that Mr Ocalan

had pleaded for his life, telling his questioners he was "full of remorse". "Please don't hang me," it quoted him as saying. "I will tell you everything."

Mr Ocalan, held responsible by Turkey for the deaths of 30,000 people during the 15-year Kurdish insurgency, is said to suffer from diabetes and high blood pressure as well as a heart complaint.

On Monday European Union foreign ministers called for "fair and correct treatment" of Mr Ocalan and an "open trial according to the rule of law before an independent court, with access to legal counsel of his choice and with international observers admitted".

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said that "the EU's idea of sending observers is not acceptable". But officials added that the court might allow "monitors" to be present.

According to *Hürriyet*, Mr Ocalan has admitted that his guerrillas fighting against Turkish rule in southeastern Turkey had received "rockets and other weapons" from Greece. Mr Ocalan also reportedly said that Greece had given training at Kurdish Workers Party camps on Greek soil "for years" and had provided him with a passport in the name of a Greek Cypriot.

President Demirel said that Greece was "rogue state" and that if it continued its "illegal actions" Turkey retained the right "to take necessary precautions in self defence".

Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish Prime Minister, said Greece had been "playing with fire".

■ Athens: Costas Simitis, the Greek Prime Minister, yesterday

called for a parliamentary investigation into the still-vague circumstances in which Mr Ocalan was abducted by Turkey from what was believed to be Greek diplomatic shelter (John Carr writes).

"We must separate our internal criticisms from national policy," Mr Simitis said after a Cabinet meeting called to discuss rapidly worsening Greek-Turkish relations in the aftermath of the capture.

Simon Jenkins, page 20

Letters, page 21

## Columnist sparks anti-Times tirade

Istanbul: Turkish papers urged their readers yesterday to "inundate" *The Times* with faxes, letters and e-mail to protest against a column in which Simon Jenkins, the former Editor of *The Times*, ironically urged the West to "bomb Turkey" (Richard Owen writes).

"Many Turks appear not to have understood that Mr Jenkins meant not that we should bomb Turkey but exactly the opposite," one Western diplomat said. "It seems that irony does not translate."

*Sabah* and *Hürriyet* both published the telephone, fax and e-mail numbers of *The Times*. In his column last Friday Mr Jenkins wrote that the

British and US Governments were too ready to use bombs. "Bomb Turkey now," he began. "Flattez Ankara. Tomahawk the Bosphorus. If we can bomb Serbia for the Kosovans and bomb President Saddam Hussein for the Iraqi Kurds, we can surely bomb Turkey for their mountain brothers."

*Sabah* did not explain that Mr Jenkins was condemning such attitudes, or quote his observation that "Britain used to send humanitarian aid to trouble-spots, it now sends explosives".

Simon Jenkins, page 20

Letters, page 21



One of the five Israeli soldiers wounded in yesterday's ambush in southern Lebanon

## Hezbollah kills three Israelis

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, yesterday demanded that Syria put an end to Hezbollah attacks on Israeli troops in southern Lebanon. The call came hours after three members of an Israeli commando unit were killed in a gun battle and five more injured.

The attack was the most serious in Lebanon this year and the biggest loss of Israeli life there since September 1997, when 12 Israeli commandos were killed. It has placed Is-

rael's future in Lebanon high on the agenda of all parties for the Israeli general election on May 17.

The shootout took place near the village of Meidoun, just north of the buffer zone that Israel has occupied in southern Lebanon since 1985, as the Israelis were on their way to attack Hezbollah (Party of God) targets and were ambushed.

Mr Netanyahu, who had a friend among the injured, said: "It is clear that if Syria wanted to stop these

attacks it has the power to do so. We expect them to curtail aggression against Israel."

Israel retaliated with artillery shells and its warplanes fired four missiles after helicopters had strafed the area.

A statement from Hezbollah, which is armed and financed by Iran with the connivance of Syria, said its fighters intercepted the commandos as they were trying to cross into unoccupied Lebanon. It said the guerrillas had suffered no casualties.



Ritter: resigned UN job in disgust over policy

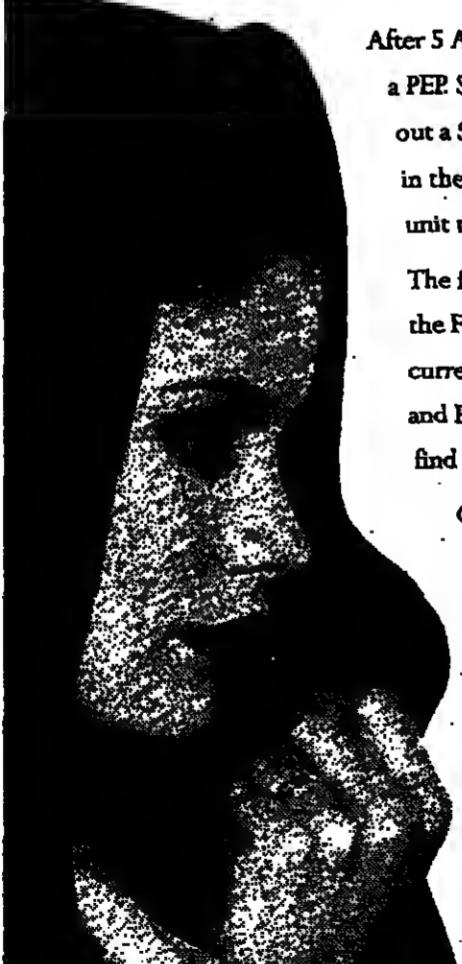
Iraq has always complained that the UN Special Commission (Unscom), set up after the war to eliminate Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction, was packed with American spies. The Iraqi Government once even expelled all the American inspectors after denouncing Mr Ritter as a spy, a charge he denies. US officials continue to insist, however, that Unscom acted as an independent technical agency in pursuit of goals set by the UN Security Council.

In the book Mr Ritter says that he and a CIA official, referred to as "Mo Dobbs", worked together "to plan the operational and intelligence support for the largest and most complex inspections undertaken by Unscom."

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# US governors back Bush for president

**IN AN** unusually early show of support, at least half of America's Republican state governors are ready to endorse the White House ambitions of George W. Bush.

Their backing emerged in Washington yesterday as word spread on the political grapevine that Mr Bush, Governor of Texas and son of the former President, was preparing to take his first official step towards running for President. He is expected to announce the formation of an exploratory committee within three weeks.

At the same time, Pete Wilson, the former Governor of California, confirmed that he would not be entering the Republican presidential primaries, having concluded that Mr Bush has gained so much momentum that his early lead in several key polls is insurmountable. With Mr Bush already competing for the attention of big donors, Mr Wilson realised he would be unable to raise the \$25 million (£15.4 million) needed to run a credible campaign.

Mr Bush has conceded that he is "warming to the task" of trying to win back the White House that his father lost to Bill Clinton in 1992. Tim McCough, a Massachusetts politician, said that Mr Bush told him of his plans for the exploratory committee in a call last week and said: "I have a feeling of calm inside myself."

Earlier concerns that Mr Bush might not run out of consideration for the impact on his wife and teenage twin daughters are fading. They are now expected to support his candidacy.

On the crucial money front, Mr Bush has begun privately assembling a team to raise \$25 million with phone calls and

## Top Republicans lend support as favourite warms to the task, Ian Brodie writes

meetings in Austin, the Texas state capital, and Washington. He has seen investment bankers from California, East Coast property tycoons and wealthy Texas oil men. Contributors to past campaigns of the elder Bush are being recruited for his son.

Opinion polls show Mr Bush to be the leading contender for the Republican nomination, but nipping at his heels is Elizabeth Dole, wife of Bob Dole who lost to Mr Clinton in 1996. She has resigned as president of the American Red Cross to give serious thought to running.

Both Mr Bush and Mrs Dole beat Al Gore, the likely Democratic candidate, in pollsters' mythical match-ups. The support for Mr Bush by as many as 10 of America's 31 Republican governors was seen as unprecedented for a non-incumbent White House hopeful who has yet to declare officially. Their ranks grew during the three-day winter meeting of the nation's governors in Washington.

"Nobody wants to be left be-

hind," said John Rowland, Governor of Connecticut. Marc Racicot, Governor of Montana, said: "They like him, they trust him and they think he can win." Frank Keating, Governor of Oklahoma, said: "He's done an excellent job as Governor. He appeals to a cross-section of the people. And I really think Texas represents the rest of the country."

Mr Bush's popularity in Texas was proved last November when he was re-elected in a landslide. He enjoys the nickname of "Dubya" from his middle initial, spoken in a Texan twang. He has already developed a thick skin for questions about his personal life, especially his wilder, younger days. He talks openly about his inability to handle alcohol which he swore off 12 years ago when he was 40. He refuses to answer questions about possible drug use in his youth.

Mr Bush had a chance to size up the White House for the first time since his father departed during a dinner that Mr Clinton gave for the governors. He also clashed with the President during a discussion by opposing an Administration plan to tie federal education aid to school performance. While agreeing with Mr Clinton's goals for better schools and teachers, Mr Bush demanded flexibility in the way funds from Washington are spent.

The federal Government should be a limited partner. If they feel like sending money to the states, fine, but don't tell us how to run things," he said.

Fellow governors backing Mr Bush include moderates and conservatives, including his brother Jeb who is Governor of Florida. George Bush Sr, living in retirement in Houston, is urging his son to run.

George W. Bush says that, after early doubts, he views with growing enthusiasm the task of trying to win back the White House his father lost to Bill Clinton



## Texas awaits verdict on 'rider from hell'

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

A JURY retired to consider its verdict last night after a prosecutor told it that a white supremacist was one of three "riders coming straight out of hell", who had dragged a black man to an agonising death behind a pick-up truck.

The 11 whites and one black deliberating at the courthouse in rural Jasper, east Texas, have to decide first if John "Bill" King is guilty of killing James Byrd and then if he deserves the death penalty. In his closing argument, Pat Hardy, the prosecutor, said that the evidence was incontrovertible.

"After they dragged that poor man and dragged him to pieces, they dropped him at a cemetery to show their defiance of God and Christianity and everything most people stand for," he said.

Under Texas law, Mr King would receive a lethal injection, rather than a life sentence, only if

he was found to have murdered his victim while committing another crime. Prosecutors have been pushing hard to show that Mr Byrd was being kidnapped when the murder took place.

In a bid to save his client from execution if convicted of murder, Brack Jones argued for the defence that the chaining and dragging was the method of the killing, not intentional kidnapping.

Before concluding its case, the prosecution provided some of the most gruesome evidence of the trial when it called a pathologist who said that he believed Mr Byrd was alive and writhing in pain as he was dragged by his chained ankles along a rough road for more than two miles behind the truck. He was decapitated when he hit a concrete culvert in the road.

"He was attempting to keep his head off the pavement. He was

conscious," said Tommy Brown, who performed the autopsy on Mr Byrd a day after the murder.

The defence in the case consisted of just three witnesses, including a fellow inmate of Mr King's during an earlier spell in prison who had applied some of the defendant's many tattoos and said they were not racist but "looked cool, that's all".

Mr King, 24, is accused of being the ringleader who wanted to kill to gain publicity for his new racist gang when he and his flatmates, Lawrence Brewer, 31, and Shawn Berry, 24, picked up Mr Byrd as he was hitchhiking home in the early hours.

They are alleged to have taken him to a back road and given him a severe beating with various tools before shackling him with the 24ft log-gang chain for his final journey.

The other two defendants face trial later this year.



John 'Bill' King is escorted from court after giving evidence earlier this week

## US blocks satellite sale to Beijing

BY IAN BRODIE

THE Clinton Administration yesterday blocked the sale of an advanced communications satellite to China, citing national security. The satellite, costing \$450 million (£280 million), was to have provided a mobile telephone network stretching over much of Asia.

Washington refused export licences to Hughes Electronics because of concerns about the network's probable value to the Chinese military. There were also worries at the Pentagon that the technology needed to place the satellite in orbit would help the Chinese to make their fleet of intercontinental ballistic missiles more accurate.

## WORLD IN BRIEF

### Parliament puts Cresson to test

**B**RUSSEL: The future of Edith Cresson, the embattled European Union Commissioner, appeared more uncertain last night after she submitted to a humiliating public interrogation by the European Parliament and insisted that she bore no guilt for alleged fraud and nepotism committed under her stewardship (Charles Bremner writes).

The most embarrassing moment for the former French Prime Minister came when Michael Tappin, a British Labour MEP, distributed a file on her employment of René Berthelot, a dentist friend from her home town of Châtellerault, where she was a long-serving mayor. Mr Tappin called on her to resign for "creating the atmosphere of cronyism".

### Anwar names attacker

**K**UALA LUMPUR: Anwar Ibrahim, right, Malaysia's former Deputy Prime Minister, directly implicated a former police chief as the man who beat him in custody, an inquiry heard (David Watts writes). It was the first time that Tan Sri Rahim Noor had been blamed for the beating which gave Mr Anwar a black eye and caused a world outcry.



### Eritrea under attack

**A**DIS ABABA: The war in the Horn of Africa worsened with Ethiopia launching a big offensive, including airstrikes, against Eritrea. The Eritrean Foreign Ministry announced the offensive as a communiqué in Addis Ababa said the Ethiopian Air Force and heavy artillery units had attacked positions on all three fronts on Sunday and Monday. Eritrea said that its forces had destroyed nine Ethiopian tanks and captured two, while repelling the western front assault. (AFP)

### Tortured men backed

**H**ARARE: A magistrate here has ruled that two journalists tortured by military interrogators last month should be allowed to visit a London clinic specialising in therapy for torture victims (Jan Raath writes). The decision came after lawyers for Mark Chavunduka, 37, editor of the *Standard*, and Ray Chocho, 33, a reporter, submitted medical evidence of their injuries. But state lawyers immediately prevented their departure for London with a High Court challenge to the ruling.

### Victim left arm behind

**M**ARSEILLE: A motorcyclist, suffering from shock, left part of an arm at the scene of an accident, but doctors reattached it after police found the limb. Olivier Faure, 21, who was hit by a car in southern France, was taken home by another driver without realising his left forearm had been severed. His mother alerted emergency workers while M. Faure was taken to hospital. Police found the arm dozens of yards from the accident scene and it was reattached in a 12-hour operation. (AP)

### Briton held hostage

**B**OGOTÁ: A Briton is among 16 foreigners being held hostage by Colombian rebels, the head of the country's anti-kidnapping unit said. The others are a Japanese, two French, four Italians, three Spaniards, one Algerian, three Venezuelans and a Chilean. Several of the foreigners, being held by three different groups, were seized at random at roadblocks which the rebels routinely set up. (AFP)

### Ukraine leader held

**M**OSCOW: Pavlo Lazarenko, left, a former Prime Minister of Ukraine arrested last week for trying to enter the United States without the correct documents, is in custody awaiting a decision by immigration authorities (Anna Blundy writes). Ukraine has sought his extradition over the theft of more than £1.2 million of state property.

### 'Pregnant' baby saved

**H**ANOI: A four-month-old Vietnamese girl with a severely distended stomach and vomiting was found to contain the developing foetuses of her two siblings. Tran Dong A, a surgeon at Ho Chi Minh City's Pediatric II Hospital, said the foetuses had been removed in a three-hour operation. He added that the baby was thin but in a stable condition. (Reuters)

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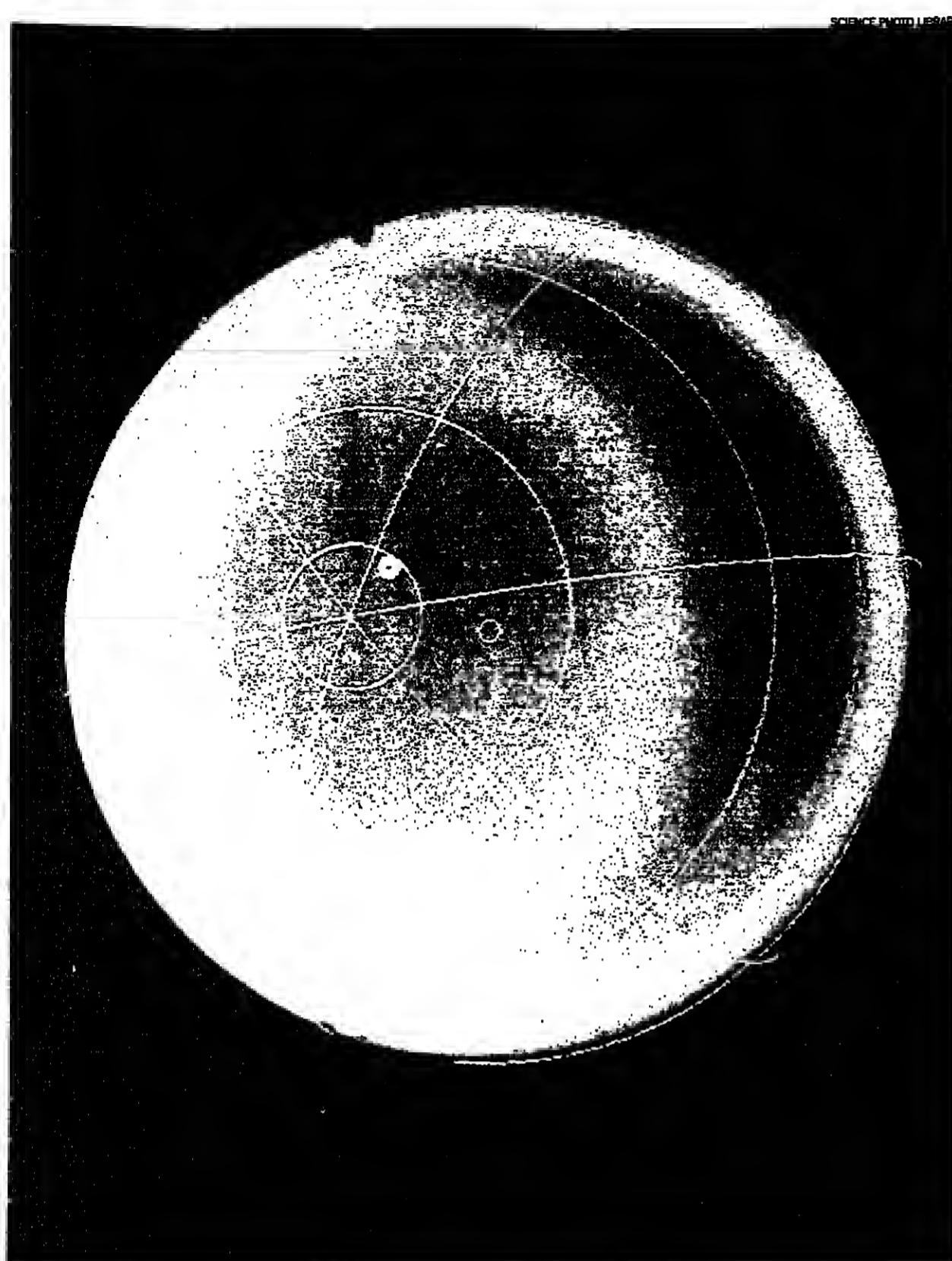


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# The unluckiest stargazer of all



An image of Uranus, taken from the Voyager II space probe in 1986. Early astronomers believed the planet to be a star.

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**T**he planet Uranus, a vast and trackless ball of gas in the outer reaches of the solar system, was discovered not once but 22 times. Credit is given to William Herschel, who, on March 13, 1781, was the first to realise that the object others had catalogued as a star was something else. He believed — quite wrongly, as it turned out — that it was a comet.

If an amateur astronomer from Manchester is right, the list of those who saw Uranus but failed to realise that it was anything out of the ordinary is about to get even longer. Kevin Kilburn, a materials manager for a Manchester plastics company, believes that Dr John Bevis, an 18th-century astronomer, may have spotted Uranus more than 40 years before Herschel.

To claim a planet is to grasp immortality. But before Herschel identified it, Uranus slipped through the fingers of John Flamsteed, who saw it six times; James Bradley (twice); Pierre Le Monnier (12 times) and Johann Tobias Mayer. All recorded it as nothing but a star.

Le Monnier's is the most inexplicable case, since he saw Uranus eight times in four weeks in December 1768 and January 1769. A planet, if seen more than once, ought to be easily distinguishable from a star because of its movement. But in poor Le Monnier's case, Uranus was near its stationary point when he made his observations.

John Bevis was a keen astronomer with an unlucky streak. He might now be remembered as the discoverer of a planet and the author of one of the finest star atlases of the 18th century, as well as the first man to identify the Crab Nebula. In fact he is forgotten.

Mr Kilburn's rehabilitation of Bevis began one evening in November 1997, when he and two fellow members of the Manchester Astronomical Society, Tony Cross and Michael Oates, were examining a mysterious star atlas in the society's collection. It was old, but they had no idea what it was.

Research convinced them that what they had was a copy of Bevis's star atlas, *Uranographia Britannica*, which he compiled from his own obser-

ations and from those of John Flamsteed and Edmond Halley. Valued at £25,000, it is one of fewer than 20 copies known to survive and one of the most complete versions anywhere.

Born in 1693, Bevis had studied medicine at Christ Church, Oxford, where Newton's *Opticks* was his inseparable companion, the *Dictionary of National Biography* records. He practised as a doctor in London but grew disaffected

of this "ghost book", as it became known, which was rediscovered last year in the cupboard at the Godlee Observatory in Manchester. The society has produced a version on CD-Rom at £13.99, which can be ordered online from its Web page, <http://www.u-net.com/ph/mas>.

The atlas shows that Bevis must have been the first to observe the Crab Nebula, later independently discovered by



The Constellation of the Great Bear, from Bevis's atlas

and, in 1738, moved to Stoke Newington, where he set up an observatory. Here he worked feverishly, often measuring the transit across the sky of 160 stars in a single night.

By 1745 he was ready to publish an exact view of the heavens in 52 large plates, containing more detail than any previous atlas. But shortly before publication, says Mr Kilburn, fate dealt Bevis a shocking blow. His publisher, John Neale, went bankrupt and the copper plates, ready for the printer, were sequestered by the Court of Chancery.

Bevis died in 1771. In 1785, his library came on to the market, contained three proof copies of the atlas and a lot of loose, first-impression star charts, which were sold to an anonymous buyer and appeared on the market again the following year in bound form as the *Atlas Celeste*, with no credit to Bevis. It is a copy

Charles Messier. Bevis also discovered the great comet of 1744, unaware that others had seen it before him, and his atlas includes Flamsteed's 1690 observation of Uranus, which he believed to be a star. But Mr Kilburn is chiefly interested in whether Bevis saw Uranus independently when making observations in 1738 of faint objects to augment Flamsteed's observations.

During that summer Uranus passed very close to the globular cluster later cata-

logued by Messier as M22, in the constellation of Sagittarius. Bevis's observations were recorded in the ghost book and certainly hint that he may have recorded Uranus.

His plate, says Mr Kilburn, shows a triangle of stars to the right of M22. Such a triangle does not exist, although two of the stars can be identified as 24 and 25 Sagittarii. The third cannot be seen on modern star maps, yet the engraving shows all three as objects of similar size. The two known stars have magnitudes of 5.5 and 6.5, while Uranus in June 1738 would have been less than half a degree from the position of the third, non-existent star, and of magnitude 5.7.

Left of M22 is another star, which could be 26 Sagittarii but is shown as brighter than that star actually is. Could this be Uranus, which in May 1738 was very close by? Small errors in Bevis's recordings' position are possible, and the engraver of the plates made occasional errors, too.

So did Bevis discover Uranus? The case is plausible but unproved. The failure of *Uranographia Britannica* to be published was not, alas, the last of his disappointments. He was not, as he had hoped, appointed Astronomer Royal and so returned to medicine, but his passion for astronomy could not be quenched and it eventually killed him. On November 6, 1771, when observing the Sun's meridian altitude, he turned too quickly from telescope to clock and sustained a fall, from the effects of which he died.

He was, says the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "of a mild and benevolent disposition", his astronomical work distinguished more by diligence than by precision. Had he had less of one and a little more of the other, he might now be as famous as Herschel.

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SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

On Wednesday March 31, in *From Captain Hook to Robocop*, Dr Peter Kyberd, from Oxford Orthopaedic Engineering Centre, will discuss how close scientists have come to creating the perfect artificial hand. Are man-machine hybrids like Robocop near to reality, or are they destined to remain in the realms of fiction?

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susan Greenfield, the director of The Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture, sponsored by Novartis, will be held at 7.30pm at The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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# A far cry from Jean Machine

Despite his huge success, Tommy Hilfiger craves higher recognition. Interview by Lisa Armstrong



The Hilfiger look: the upscale designs for this summer

**A**ll American, a pictorial style tome by Tommy Hilfiger, is speckled with his convivial aperçus. On fashion conformists he says: "I was one." On English rock: "It's influenced me totally." On jeans: "They should look and feel faded and comfortable, and be somewhat irreverent, like you don't have a regular job and you don't care."

Hilfiger, one senses, wants to be liked, wants to be on first names with the world — witness the name of his hugely successful scent, Tommy.

Occasionally be-jammed, but sometimes in hand-made suits from his favourite London tailors, Anderson & Sheppard, he stands astride a clothing empire about which, one imagines, he cares very much.

Enough, at any rate, for the fashionists' disinclination to regard him as a serious designer to rankle, even though he says that he has come to terms with "being someone who makes clothes that aren't outrageously expensive and sells to the young".

But, he concedes, he would like to be regarded as "an important American Designer". This seems unlikely, despite Red Label, a new upscale line of men's and women's clothes,

that he has hopes of seeing at the Oscars. If not, it will be in his store at New Bond Street, London — 16,000 sq ft of Tommy's World — which opened yesterday. He should worry.

Tommy Hilfiger Inc turns over \$1.5 billion (£909 million)

a year and is giving Ralph Lauren a run for his Polo shirts (the latter recently laid off 250 staff, one consequence, according to *The New York Times*, of Hilfiger's success).

Hilfiger, who owns a quarter of the company, is personally valued at around \$100 million (£62 million) — enough to finance his personal staff of 12: the 22-room clapboard Colefax & Fowler farmhouse in Greenwich, Connecticut, from where his helicopter journey into work every day takes 15 minutes; the spread in Tuscany; and to see his four children, aged between three and 13, through private school.

His personal life is markedly sane. His wife, Susie, runs her own business selling traditional English-style children's clothes. Her nostalgic style is as far removed from Tommy Hilfiger merchandise as Miley Cyrus is from *Tank Girl*. These contradictions are one of the endearing aspects about Hilfiger. If the label is straightforward in its demo-



Tommy Hilfiger, the American designer, has a new store, Tommy's World, in New Bond Street, London

catic, youthful American vision, the man is less clear-cut. The alliances with the more controversial personalities in showbusiness — from Mick Jagger to Hugh Grant and Snoop Doggy Dog — are only part of the story.

His offices, above Fifth Avenue, are accessorised with a couple of electric Gibson guitars ("Tommy likes to play," says his PR, "but not so you'd

like to hear"). But they are also furnished with WASPy sisal matting, weathered leather armchairs, and black and white framed photos.

His earliest ad bore the notorious legend: "The four great designers for men are **Karl Lagerfeld, Gianni Versace, and Molly Hatchet**." For some one whose fashion expertise at that point comprised a stint as a sales assistant in Jean Machine on the King's Road, London, and a moderately successful jeans line that went into chapter II, this was an enviable display of self-belief.

"Those ads were thought up by George Lois, who is a marketing genius. I was a little embarrassed at their tone in the beginning," he says, "but it would take years to get known without them."

The latest tactic, of developing an upmarket line to headline the existing ones, is the reverse of normal procedure, which creates an aspirational image before plunging into diffusion markets. But it might well work. Red Label is stuffed with wearable pieces any wannabe rock chick would love.

**B**orn 46 years ago in Elmira, New York State, Hilfiger was one of nine children of a Catholic watchmaker, and left school early ("They thought I was dyslexic"). He came to London and returned a year later to put his Jean Machine experience to some use.

"I found working there boring — it was just piles of blue jeans." With his last \$150 he bought 20 pairs of bell-bottoms and opened a boutique entitled People's Place. Five years later he had ten stores and a Porsche 911. By 1977 People's Place was in trouble. "I was hard on myself. I vowed never to fall into sloppy work habits again. Money, after a certain point," he says, "is not what drives me." So what does? "Fear of failure."

One imagines him being a no-nonsense father, although he says: "I'm trying hard not to be too hard on my kids." Certainly they are not paraded in public and didn't attend his fashion show in Manhattan last week. "They had homework and school the next day." Whatever one thinks of this bid for normality, there is one small chink in Tommy World; while his three sons are happy to have their Dad's name across their chests, his daughter prefers the plainer stuff. "She's not crazy about logos," you see.

## It's weird but it's new England

A new Kent estate is being marketed as a perfect English village. But Celia Brayfield is not convinced

**W**ho would buy a house from a man who edges his driveway with begonias? Or from a woman named Sharon who wears a white hard hat instead of white high heels? The answer is supplied by a BBC documentary that captures *Mondeo Man* and *Mike Leigh Woman* buying the houses of their dreams in the new estate at King's Hill, near Maidstone in Kent.

Let's get the language right. It's not a house, it's a home; the developer, Crest Homes, says so. And it's not an estate, it's a village; the super-developers, Rouse Kent Ltd, says so, and points to village features such as a village green and a village golf course. And she's not a Mike Leigh Woman, she calls herself a "mild-mannered ruralist", and she's clear that "like most people who've grown up in towns and suburbs, I have a feeling that I'd like to be closer to the good things in rural life".

But she doesn't want "that cocked thing walking you up at 3am", and Sharon doesn't want any village-style mud in the show home because that would give buyers the message that *Homes* doesn't care. This is a subtle documentary, perhaps too subtle, but a dignified respite from the grotesque junk that now passes for factual TV. The film-makers spent a year recording the building, marketing, sale and occupation of 53 new homes in this ground-breaking ah, village. We can make up our own minds about the saleswoman who explains how to push buyers into higher mortgages — "If they don't know what they can afford, try to steer them in the right direction."

The programme deserves to be archived because it records a piece of England in the process of defining itself. We, the English, are supposed to be having an identity crisis, but nobody has told them on King's Hill, where they're naming streets after the English apple varieties that don't grow in Kent any more.

The show-home designer knows how we see ourselves — school of *House & Garden* circa 1989, which means chintz-effect curtains with tie-backs, sloping ceilings in the bedrooms, fitted carpets, double doors. The architects were in no doubt ei-

ther, going for diamond-paned leaded-light windows and vernacular-style brickwork. "People like houses with a front door in the middle and four windows at the front, like children draw," says Sharon. She must be right. Crest Estates aims to sell its villages before they are built and the show home always goes first. They have to budget for the theft of everything pocket-sized in the building, presumably by people who don't know they can afford prices from £125,000 to just under £300,000.

King's Hill is the Utopia of the Nineties, the latest attempt at something we've been trying to get right all this century. Its 650-acre site was once West Malling airfield, and it is 15 miles from the M25, an hour from London and just more than two hours from Paris. Kent County Council, with a stiff quota of new homes to provide, brought in Rouse Kent, affiliates of an American real estate investment trust, who "master-planned" the site. In order of priority, its vision was of a business park employing 10,000 people, the golf course, 1,850 homes, schools, shops, a pub, a medical centre, the University of Greenwich, sports grounds and public art.

The masterplan included recycling the airfield concrete, replanting the wild orchids and replacing trees cut down. In 1996 Tony Blair visited to bless King's Hill, which he called "a fantastic development". Now, 550 homes and two public sculptures into the masterplan, it seems fantastic in many senses.

The people who moved in are youngish, upwardly mobile white families who are happy to sign covenants agreeing not to threaten property values by painting their front doors forbidden colours, or flaunting their souls for a view of the golf course. King's Hill will shortly be declared a new parish, but there is no church. It's weird, but it is real and it may be the new England.

• Living Room, Modern Times. BBC2, Wednesday March 3, 9pm.

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CHANGING TIMES

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# Darkness visible in Mississippi

The South is another country, and Faulkner the best guide

**T**here are two ways to get to Oxford, Mississippi, from the state capital. You can follow the Natchez road, an old Indian trail straight north into the hill country. Or you can take the flat back roads through the battered Delta towns. They used to be synonymous with the blues and with the worst poverty in America, but they have had the edge of their bleakness rubbed off by the cash from new casinos.

Either way, you are likely to be going to this Southern town for only one of two reasons. Either you're visiting "Ole Miss", the University of Mississippi, itself hardly free from the taint of the state's racist history. Or you are drawn by the William Faulkner industry, which has flourished in the town where he lived most of his life.

There is a case not just for thinking Faulkner is one of America's greatest writers, but for actually reading the books. And, incidentally, for visiting Oxford. I say that somewhat defensively, because so many people hold the opposite view with passion. "Some of the sentences are longer than a page" said one of my Washington colleagues incredulously. If I wanted to bother with visiting a shrine to the South, he continued, I would be better off going to Graceland.

But thousands do make the pilgrimage to Oxford. The town was ambivalent about Faulkner during his life. It has been less so since he won the Nobel Prize, and the value of the tourism became obvious. The square around the courthouse, lined with coloured brick and wooden two-storey buildings, is unchanged from his lifetime — or from his writing. At any time of year, it will attract crowds of fans, many from European universities where the study of the Old South has become hugely fashionable.

They take trips out to his grave, to tuck a bottle of whisky into its grassy surround. Or they walk 20 minutes to his white, pillared house, Rowan Oak, to look reverently at his bed, his spare wooden furniture, his stables, and at the many photographs of a surprisingly small man stroking tall horses. Despite the quietness of Rowan Oak, it was a troubled life. His wife tried to commit suicide on honeymoon; she survived to negotiate a marriage that was an alcohol-drenched battlefield. Faulkner had one daughter, and too many lovers.

Given the darkness of Faulkner's life and work, there is inevitably something comic about the middle-aged groupies. Long strangers to Bohemia, they are trying nevertheless to relive the excitement they felt during their college literature courses. Many of the female pilgrims wear ethnic jewellery at the neck and ears, open-toed leather sandals on their feet, and something shapeless and cotton in between. One fan, in late middle age, appeared to be offering herself in sacrifice. She was wearing a T-shirt inscribed with the famous quotation: "If a writer has to rob his mother,

[comment@the-times.co.uk](mailto:comment@the-times.co.uk)

'I cannot call the fire brigade for help because the animal stuck in my acacia tree is a sheep'

In the centre of my back garden, some fifty feet from the house, there is a large acacia tree. Could be forty feet high; taller, certainly, than the loft in which I currently sit, staring at it. Now, while I normally sit staring at it because I do not know what to write, today is different: today I am staring at it because I do not know what to do. Which means that today, I do at least know what to write: I shall write about what I do not know what to do about.

What I do not know what to do about is the animal which is stuck in the branches of the acacia tree. It is has been stuck there for some hours. It is so stuck that it cannot come down of its own accord, and since it is halfway up the acacia tree, it is too high for my accord to be of any help to it. Yes, you are right, in such cases the normal course

is to call the fire brigade; but this case is a bit less such than that. I cannot call the fire brigade, because the animal is a sheep. You will reply that this should not face the fire brigade, we have seen London's Burning, there is no job too great or small for these plucky lads, they would have that sheep down in a trice — and I do not disagree. I didn't say the fire brigade couldn't do it. I said I couldn't call them.

Let me lower my stare, in your behalf, to the grassy area below the tree. See, it is not as grassy as it should be. That is because the tree is above it. Every year, as the tree spreads wider, the lawn grows bolder. But this year I decided to remedy that, which is why my lowered stare can also see that the grassless area, about a hundred square feet, is roped off and criss-crossed with twine to discourage birds from dining on the seed with which, a couple

of days ago, I sowed the baldness.

It does not, of course, discourage the birds at all. They are not mugs, birds: they have knocked about a bit, and they have learnt that criss-crossed twine is not unlike a Michelin star, criss-crossed twine says this is a top place to eat, this is gourmet heaven, bring the family, tell your friends. No sooner had I finished criss-crossing and gone inside than a hundred square feet of twine were tucked in. So I went outside again, waving and shouting, and they flew off and stood on the fence. After an hour or so it got dark, and we all went somewhere else.

That night, Mrs Coren suggested I stick a broom in the middle of the patch and put a hat on it. It

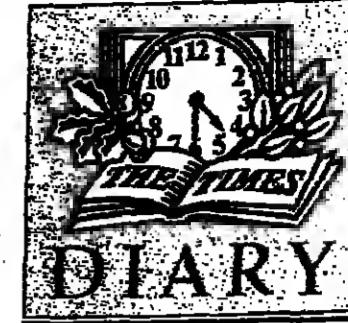
worked a treat: it was so much clearer than criss-crossed twine that, next morning, the children trebled. Birds were diving from ten thousand feet. I had sown Pearl Harbor. So since, after a couple of hours, all the fun had somehow gone out of shouting and waving, I telephoned the garden centre where I had bought the seed. Yes, they said, that is one of the curious things about birds: despite having extremely small brains, they nevertheless have just enough IQ to know that a broom with a hat on is a broom with a hat on. What I needed, they continued, was a scarecrow that moved in the wind, such as balloons. Better yet, said Mrs Coren, as I explained why I was putting my coat on, did I remember that

place where we used to get inflatable figures for the children's birthday parties? It was called The Non-Stop Party Shop, in Sydney Street. I think that had inflatable cats, said Mrs Coren. Those would be just the thing.

They probably would. There is no way of knowing. Having driven from Cricklewood to Chelsea, I discovered that The Non-Stop Party Shop did not have inflatable cats. They had only one inflatable animal. Can you guess what it was? Of course you can; but can you guess why the box declared it to be The Barking Sheep? I couldn't guess; either, but when I inflated it, I noticed that it had an orifice. Mrs Coren and I looked at the orifice for a bit, and then Mrs Coren observed that the sheep had blue eyes. She asked me if I had ever

seen a sheep with blue eyes before. I told her I didn't think so, but then again, I didn't go to many non-stop parties these days. Do you think it'll frighten the birds off, she said, and I said I don't know, but it scares the hell out of me.

That was Monday afternoon, just before I took the sheep out into the garden and tied its front legs to two pegs, leaving its back end free to swing about in the breeze. And, do you know, it was a total success: from 2pm to nightfall, not a bird went near. But it is Tuesday morning, now, and, as you may just have guessed, the breeze went from strength to strength last night. I don't know what time the gale got up, which is why I have got up alone, which is why I have a blue-eyed sheep with an orifice in my acacia tree. Now do you understand why I can't call the fire brigade?



## Song of strife

THE Pet Shop Boys are threatening to sue Roger Scruton. The popstars Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe are upset about a reference to them in the philosopher's *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Modern Culture*. It questions how much input they have in their records.

Scruton is surprised his words should have been considered defamatory by the singers. He insists that he thinks they are brilliant studio technicians. "I am concerned if this has given offence," Scruton tells me. "A lot of my writing does and I apologise if my words are misinterpreted."

WHISKY to the general. Lord Lamont of Lerwick has sent a bottle to dear Augusto Pinochet. Norm, campaigning to get the Generalissimo home, felt he needed cheering up. When Pinochet received it, he asked: "Is Lamont a law lord?" He looked glum when he learnt that Norm had only been a Chancellor.

■ LIZ CALDER is to be eased out of the Editor-in-Chief's chair at Bloomsbury. The grand dame of Fitzrovian fiction is to be replaced by someone more able to "pull in the young talent". Calder is editor to many heavy volumes, such as Margaret Atwood, as well as Will Self and Joanne Trollope (below). She is to be replaced by Alexandra Pringle, a literary agent of five



years' standing, who has also been editorial director of Virago and Hamish Hamilton.

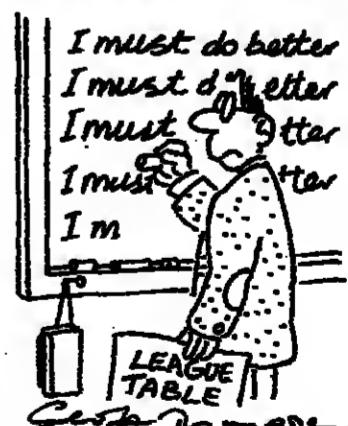
She will arrive at Bloomsbury shortly to replace Calder, a founding director, next January. "But Liz will continue to work on her own list within Bloomsbury for the foreseeable future," I am told.

LITERARY courting. American Psycho author Bret Easton Ellis tells me he had a blind date with Donna Tartt. "We were both at Bennington College, Vermont," says Ellis. "Friends set us up as we both wrote. We put first chapters of our books in each other's pigeonholes. She got the first chapter of Less Than Zero and she sent me A Secret History. Then we discussed them on the date."

■ KEN LIVINGSTONE is gently setting aside his idealism to address a male-only gentlemen's club.

The Savile, devoid of women since 1868, will be platform for Ken's mayoral bid in April.

His recco into the haunt of Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Edward Elgar is courtesy of Illyd Harrington, his GLC chum and Savile stalwart. My advice: if you want to stay standing, avoid the club claret.



SIR JAMES SPICER has met his Churchillian hour of destiny. The ex-Tory MP plans to cap 40 years in politics — by standing for the local council. Sir Jimmy, 73, is to fight Beaminster: "I don't really want to, but I can't stand our Liberal council," he booms. "It will bang the drum for oldies."

FASHION god: Stephen Byers. The slick Trade and Industry Secretary has sashayed into London Fashion Week: "Shoes are my weakness," he tells me. "I wear trainers at weekends when I walk across the moor and I wear shorts when people might not see me. I like clothes, especially Armani, but," he adds mysteriously, "there is pressure to wear dark suits."

DURING filming of Shakespeare in Love, Joseph Fiennes fell for Gwyneth Paltrow — dressed as a boy: "She made a lot of guys doubt their sexuality. I love that confusion of love." I fear the admission is called bad box office.

JASPER GERARD



## FIVE TESTS FOR EUROPE

From changeover to people's choice: *The Times* looks forward to what must change before any referendum

**Y**esterday in the Commons, the Prime Minister fired the starting gun for his attempt to take Britain into monetary union. In substance as well as style, this was no mere "change of gear" but the crossing of the Rubicon that Paddy Ashdown rushed to applaud. Tony Blair's desire to steer Britain into EMU is now clear. The euro, he says, is "a reality": Britain must prepare to be part of it.

The amendments that he announced to this year's Finance and Social Security Bills require substantial public investment. They anticipate a victory in the national referendum which, the Government has promised, would follow a Cabinet decision to join. Britons are not to be asked their view before this money is spent, only afterwards. These amendments will authorise government departments to make their systems euro-compatible. The Government is thus planning on the basis that the single currency is here to stay, that it will be well managed and that Britain will be part of it. And Mr Blair has now given the lobbyists for EMU the signal they have long demanded, starting a process designed to convince voters that entry is a foregone conclusion.

**I**nevitability is one of the most seductive mantras of modern European politics. To go with the flow is the greatest desire of modern European politicians. To be left out of a seemingly inevitable European unification is almost the greatest fear of this consciously modern British Prime Minister.

Fortunately, Mr Blair has another fear, greater even than his fear of exclusion from the councils of those who have chosen EMU. He fears repudiation and defeat by the British electorate. He will not recommend to Britons that they give up their currency unless he is confident that the reply will be yes. Today that answer would be no.

Yesterday's statement is confirmation of his confidence that he can change public opinion. He will, however, follow the trend of that opinion with exquisite care. His decision on whether to ask voters to join will still depend on when and if he judges that the majority is so persuaded. Thus, in a decision based on the constant analysis of opinion polls, millions of Britons have a responsibility to think and to choose. Those people and institutions best able to influence public opinion have the very greatest responsibility.

*The Times*, which is both a British newspaper and a European newspaper, is one of those institutions. For more than two centuries we have watched the successes and failures of continental countries to seek prosperity and harmony. We have had no monopoly of wisdom. But no newspaper has surpassed us for engagement in the issues which guide the islands of Britain in their dealings with the rest of the world.

We are not, and never have been, anti-Europeans, little-Englishers, blood-and-soil nationalists or shriners from the risks of the unknown. Those epithets already form the charge-sheet against all opponents of Britain adopting the euro; and in some cases the use of these words may be justified. *The Times*, however, is not persuaded of the economic merits of monetary union and takes the constitutional issues more seriously than the Prime Minister appears to.

As Europeans, as internationalists, as democrats and advocates of free trade in goods and ideas, we want to see a successfully modernising, dynamic Europe open to the world. The reforming agenda for Europe that Mr Blair set out yesterday is one that we would share. He believes that this is the direction that the eurozone is taking. But in the 11 countries of the eurozone, what we see is too much of the opposite. On the long referendum road, where their every move and mood will be observed by government pollsters, the British people should be acting as sharp observers themselves, looking at the eurozone to see if this is a system to which they want to lock their fate.

**T**he Government's policy, as set out in October 1997 and given vastly greater political impetus by the Prime Minister yesterday, it can be simply summarised. "In principle", it wants to join. The "constitutional issue" is a factor but "not an overriding one". Mr Blair set it aside even more clearly yesterday, saying that "it is right for Britain to overcome these political and constitutional arguments and the fears behind them". "The economic benefits must", however, "be clear and unambiguous." The Cabinet will recommend entry only if five economic tests are met. The "first and most critical" is the durable convergence of the UK business

cycle with that of the eurozone. The second is sufficient "flexibility" to adapt to a single currency regime. The Government accepts that "unemployment and inflexibility" are problems for eurozone countries, but the emphasis is on Britain's need to tackle its own "long-term unemployment, lack of skills and in some areas lack of competition".

The third is the effect on inward investment to the UK. The fourth is the impact on the City's future as Europe's leading financial centre which the Government believes would be more secure within EMU. The fifth is the effect on British jobs.

These are practical markers, concentrating on technical questions such as asymmetric business cycles. The tests are narrow even in terms of the Government's insistence, reinforced by the Prime Minister yesterday, that the decision will be based exclusively on economic considerations. And they are tests for Britain to pass, not ways of

### THE FIVE TESTS

Before serious debate can begin about the balance between EMU's economic advantages and constitutional costs, the eurozone needs to undergo substantial economic and political change:

- The "European social model" with its low growth, high taxes and huge unemployment must give way to one that is more dynamic and competitive. Signs of this will be dramatically reduced state intervention, elimination of subsidies, reform of welfare disincentives and unfunded pensions systems and much smaller public payrolls. Government spending, adjusted for accelerated privatisation, must be cut to 45 per cent or less of GDP, enabling steep cuts in taxation.

- Flexible labour markets must show consistently high levels of employment. That will require visible reform of restrictive labour laws and other non-competitive practices, sharply reduced non-wage labour costs and open markets in government procurement. A key part of this test will be a steep and sustainable fall in eurozone unemployment, currently averaging 10.8 per cent, to around British levels, with strong private sector growth in jobs.

- The single currency must be a manifest and sustained success. It must work smoothly to the benefit of all its members and command popular support. To avoid social unrest, a rise in nationalism or a political backlash against the EU itself, the gains must be seen by a clear majority of Europe's voters to outweigh the pain of economic adjustment and the diminution of democratic controls. The eurozone must begin to demonstrate that it can ride out recessions and shocks that affect some member states more than others: by the expected referendum date of 2002, this vital criterion is unlikely to be measurable by any solid objective test.

- The constitution of the European Central Bank must be radically reformed. The ECB is now the most powerful public institution in Europe but it is not responsible to any elected body. It operates in secret, refuses to disclose its voting records, sets its own targets and acts as judge and jury of its own performance. Its officials cannot be dismissed, disciplined or censured by any government or elected body. The ECB's objectives must be revised, to charge it with avoiding deflation as well as inflation. Its adversarial relationship with Europe's elected governments, already causing major political clashes in Europe, must be clarified. Making the ECB's constitution compatible with democracy and economic reality will require amendments to the Maastricht treaty.

- Monetary union must prove workable without a drive to European political union. Key parts of this test will be the retention of national sovereignty in fiscal policies, including corporate taxation and taxes on savings, with the veto preserved and no extension of collective decision-making in this domain. The drive to harmonise or "co-ordinate" national laws, whether directly in EU councils or indirectly, through recourse by the Commission to social chapter, health and safety or single market provisions, must be halted. Both politically and economically, the eurozone must be outward-looking; monetary union must not be an obstacle to EU enlargement.

measuring what would make the eurozone irresistibly attractive.

**W**e believe that tests are needed on the other side too, tests that the single currency area must pass before debate can be joined about whether it could conceivably make sense for Britain to be part of it. These tests must be met before the Government should even consider putting membership to a referendum.

To list them indicates the distance to be travelled. Much of Europe still awaits its modernising revolution. In terms of labour costs, welfare bills, bankrupt pension funds, state subsidies and government spending, taxation and unemployment, the eurozone needs to change in fundamental ways. When these changes have been clearly seen to happen, Europe will indeed be "going Britain's way", making possible a rational assessment of the "success" of the single currency and a properly based debate on whether this country should take an irreversible step to stay

in line with its continental neighbours. A thriving monetary union would have a stable currency, a rate of growth as high or higher than its competitors and, after a decade of economic stagnation, a thriving jobs market in economies open to the world. For this scenario to be realised, and for unemployment to shrink at all, eurozone governments must first liberate their economies far more aggressively than they show signs of doing. Prospects that the euro will promote structural reforms in the eurozone of the kind we see as indispensable are currently slight.

The trend, as we see it — and as Oskar Lafontaine and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the German and French finance ministers driving the eurozone agenda, describe it — points the other way.

**T**he euro-II governments have demanded much sacrifice from their publics as they squeezed their economies into conformity with the Maastricht criteria. Most have neglected supply-side reforms. These will now be politically tougher to put in place: voters have been told to expect a euro-dividend in jobs, not further painful adjustments and initial job losses. The eurozone is not an "optimal currency area" where labour moves freely between broadly comparable economies. Germany's overall labour costs are four times those in Portugal and more than a third higher than Italy's — and Britain's. Low-cost, high-unemployment countries such as Spain will have every incentive to make the most of these cost differentials.

There will therefore be a temptation, to which Germany and France are already succumbing, to demand tax, social security and wage harmonisation to protect them against "social dumping". This will be severely counter-productive. If Britain were to join monetary union, the risk is that, far from increasing its influence for change, membership would put Britain under irresistible pressure to dismantle this country's hard-won reforms of the past two decades.

A further cause for concern is the eurozone's design faults, notably the insulation of the European Central Bank from political accountability and its exclusive concern with price stability. These increase the risks that a one-size-fits-all monetary policy will be needlessly deflationary.

"Convergence" with stagnant, unreformed economies would be an historic error. So far, Britain and its European partners seem to us to be marching to the sound of different drums. We prefer the British beat, not for narrow nationalistic reasons but because it strikes a more distinctively modern note. We see no gain in being yoked to economic creeds outworn, nor do we think that this would benefit the EU any more than it would benefit Britain.

We would, finally, need to be persuaded on the constitutional issues which, whatever Mr Blair affects to believe, have not been resolved. The importance to democracy of political accountability cannot lightly be dismissed. The EU's democratic deficit, wide enough already, gapes wider still under monetary union.

British politicians, though not British voters, have always been reluctant to acknowledge the political dimensions of the EU. Their continental partners, more realistic, believe that this democratic deficit will be bridged only by a pan-European government. The single currency, as many of them now openly say, requires one.

But such a government of all Europe is not inevitable — particularly if Britain stays out of the eurozone. We see the possibility of a far safer and healthier alternative, one that will keep government close to the governed and be more compatible with an enlarged Union.

Britain's membership of the EU is a settled fact. Outside or inside EMU, it will have powerful political influence. It should use this influence to encourage the EU to work with the grain of Europe's immense diversity. Only thus can the experiment of European Union be compatible with the pull of national loyalties. The cause of European integration is not best served by the notion that all countries must march in lock-step. For historical reasons, some EU countries genuinely desire political integration. They should be able to go ahead, provided that nations not sharing that desire do not have to join them.

Flexibility is the key to harmony and prosperity in Europe. That is the strategic prize which every British voter should keep in mind when an inflexible future is being represented, increasingly and ever more shrilly represented, as an inevitable one.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9AN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Prospects for the police after accusation of racism

From the Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales

Sir, I am confident that all police officers will recognise the gravity of the issues dealt with in the Macpherson report [details, February 22 and 23]. This organisation speaks on behalf of all officers in England and Wales below the rank of superintendent.

The overwhelming majority of those officers have feelings of deep sadness and regret over the events surrounding the murder of Stephen Lawrence. There has been a tragic miscarriage of justice, due almost entirely to the mistakes made during the murder investigation. In their dealings with the Lawrence family, some officers may have been insensitive. But there can be no justification for a blanket allegation that the police did not care about this murder because the victim was black.

I have no wish to understate the real problems of racism in the police service. However, I cannot accept that the report is right to conclude that the Metropolitan Police [or any other police force in Britain] is riven by "pernicious and insidious racism". Sir William Macpherson of Cluny defines this as "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin". Collective implies that responsibility for this failure applies across the board.

This is grossly unfair. It ignores the work put in day after day by the great majority of police officers who strive to uphold their oath of office, to act without fear or favour towards all members of the community. If there are failings in policies and operational strategies, they are faults of leadership and management among those who take these decisions, be they legislators or chief officers.

To condemn him and his officers now for failing to transform the Metropolitan Police in the relatively short time he has had in his post is surely both ill-considered and unjust.

Yours faithfully,

LAWRENCE T. ROACH.

43 Ripon Way, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 2HY. February 23.

From Mr Simon Hughes, MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey Liberal Democrat

Sir, No effort must be spared to eliminate racism from all our public services but, above all, our police. We must be vigilant, however, not to turn accountability into scapegoating [leading article, February 23].

Sir Paul Condon took over the Metropolitan Police a manner of weeks before Stephen Lawrence was killed. If it was racist at that time, the fault must lie chiefly with his predecessors. Since 1993, however, much more there is to do things have significantly improved.

Fingers should not be pointed at successive Metropolitan Police Commissioners without being pointed also at the Metropolitan Police authorities — namely the Home Secretaries. If the last Government had transferred responsibility for the Metropolitan Police away from the Home Office to people directly accountable to Londoners [as Liberal Democrats have always argued], racism in the police service would almost certainly have been tackled much more quickly.

The most constructive way forward from this week should entail the most determined effort to recruit black and Asian graduates to our public services, in particular to the police, and a much greater commitment to providing the police with the resources for the personnel and the technology they need to investigate crime in London.

Yours sincerely,  
SIMON HUGHES  
(Liberal Democrat)  
London Speaker of the House of Commons.  
February 23.

### Jenkins and Turkey

From Mr Altayur Kilic

Sir, As a long-time reader of *The Sunday Telegraph* to attempt to publish excerpts from Sir William Macpherson's inquiry on Sunday when the report of the inquiry is to be published in full on Wednesday, once the interested parties, the Lawrence family and the Metropolitan Police have had an opportunity to read it in its entirety? *The Sunday Telegraph's* course of action is to be condemned.

This, alas, is yet another example of the press acting in its own selfish commercial interest, behaving more as part of the entertainment industry than a responsible guardian of the public interest. The almost universal support for *The Sunday Telegraph's* actions elsewhere in the press clearly suggest that the interests of those affected by this inquiry are regarded as secondary to increased sales of newspapers.

It is all right for Mr Jenkins to attack Western hypocrisy over Kosovo, but he is ill-advised to do so in relation to Turkey at a very sensitive time for our country, even though the same hypocrisy is being shown towards the Kurdish problem after the capture of a terrorist who has the blood of more than 30,000 Turks and Kurds on his hands.

Yours sincerely,  
ALTEMUR KILIC  
(Columnist, *Turkey*).  
Dogru Muvakkit Sokak,  
No 23 Emirgan,  
Istanbul 80550. February 22.

### Arsenal's 'fair play'

From Mr Clive Hughes

Sir, Mr Simon Carne [letter, February 17] is incorrect in stating that a referee may not stop a game for unsporting behaviour.

Law 12 of the *Laws of the Game* states that "a player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if... he is guilty of unsporting behaviour". The same law also explains that an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any offence where play is stopped to caution a player.

There was no need, therefore, for the referee of the February 13 match between Arsenal and Sheffield United to have waited until the ball was out of play [sic, in the net] before stopping the game.

If he had acted immediately then the debate regarding "fair play" need never have started.

Yours faithfully,  
CLIVE HUGHES.  
57 Blaen Cwm,  
Llandudno,  
Conwy LL30 1LE.  
*clivemhughes@arsenalfc.net*  
February 17.

### A victory for rugby

From Mr John Willcox-Jones

Sir, The Scots now believe they should have beaten the English, although the English do not think they beat the Scots well enough.

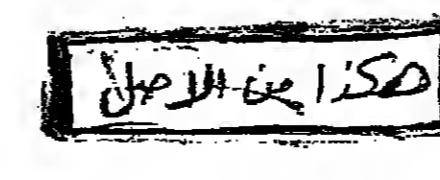
The Welsh nearly beat the Irish, who feel they should also have beaten the French [reports, Sport, February 22]. Meanwhile, the French just smile — at least for a few more weekends.

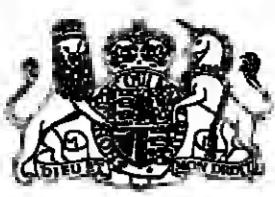
Raw nationalism prevails with millions following the battles. There are many sore heads the following day, but nobody gets killed — the beauty of the Five Nations is, thank goodness, well and truly with us again.

Now bring on the Italians!  
Yours faithfully,  
JOHN WILLCOX-JONES.  
La Haye,  
Reading Road, Chelsey,  
Oxfordshire OX10 9HG.  
*100106300@compuserve.com*  
February 21.

### Business letters, page 29

Letters to the Editor for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046 — or by e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*





## COURT CIRCULAR

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**  
February 23: The Queen held an Investiture at Buckingham Palace this morning.

The Right Hon Tony Blair, MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an Audience with the Queen this evening.

The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, this evening attended a Reception for the LEPPA 75th Anniversary "Quest for Dignity" an competition at the Royal Geographical Society, London, and was received by Sir Christian Bonington (President of LEPPA).

The Labour election has succeeded the Lady Susan Hussey as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

**FEVEREY**  
February 23: The Duke of Edinburgh, President this morning, Chaired an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Central Council of Physical Recreation at St James's Palace.

His Royal Highness today attended the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee Lunch at the Savoy Hotel, London WC2.

**CLARENCE HOUSE**  
February 23: Mr Michael Gordon Lennons has succeeded the Hon Mrs Rhodes as Lady in Waiting to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

**ST JAMES'S PALACE**  
February 23: The Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief, The Parachute Regiment, today visited 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment whilst on exercise on Salisbury Plain.

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**  
February 23: The Duke of York, attended a reception for the

NSPCC at St James's Palace, London SW1.

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**  
February 23: The Prince Edward, Patron, London Mozart Players, this evening held a Concert and Dinner at Buckingham Palace.

February 23: The Princess Royal, Patron, National Association of Victim Support Schemes, this morning attended the launch of Victim Support's Silver Jubilee, Cranmer House, 39 Brixton Road, Brixton, London.

Her Royal Highness today attended the National Painting Club's Calcutta Cup Luncheon at the Cafe Royal, Regent Street, Westminster, London.

**KENSINGTON PALACE**  
February 23: The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, The Friends of the Gibraltar Heritage Society, this evening attended the Annual Meeting and Reception at the Imperial War Museum, London SE1.

**ST JAMES'S PALACE**  
February 23: The Duke of Kent, Trustee, National Museum of Science and Industry, this morning attended a meeting of the Board of Trustees at the Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7.

**THATCHER HOUSE LODGE**  
February 23: Princess Alexandra, President, this morning visited the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Shop at 244 Upper Richmond Road West, East Sheen, London.

Her Royal Highness, Deputy President, this afternoon received Mr Michael Whittam upon relinquishing his appointment as Director-General of the British Red Cross Society.

## Sir Nigel catches up with his past

BY AJAN HAMILTON

IT IS a fine definition as to whether the Second Permanent Secretary (Finance) at the Treasury outranks the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Administrative Affairs. But not to worry: both were knighted by the Queen yesterday, and both for the second time.

Sir Humphrey Appleby, the pivotal Machiavelli of the BBC series *Yes, Minister*, has been a knight for years. Yesterday fiction became fact when his true persona, the actor Nigel Hawthorne, was dubbed at Buckingham Palace for services to television, film and theatre.

Sir Nigel, 70, said afterwards that he had felt nervous at the ceremony but so, he thought, had the Queen. Still he had felt himself in good company. "The chap before me and the chap after me were both senior civil servants, so I really feel quite at home."

He was preceded in the queue for the royal sword in the Palace ballroom by Sir Nigel Wicks, a real-life Treasury mandarin who was being upgraded from Knight Commander of the Bath to Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, a decoration which logically should carry the unfortunate suffix KGB, but in fact awards the wearer the initials GCB.

As he had his photograph taken in the Palace courtyard, Sir Nigel said: "It is a constant surprise to me that I have been so honoured, but that is



Sir Nigel with the insignia of his knighthood

not to say I don't enjoy it."

For all his protestations of stage fright, Sir Nigel appeared to find in command of yesterday's performance, given that, on his walk from the Grand Entrance to the Palace Ballroom, he passed at least two portraits of himself in another acclaimed role, that of King George III. "I thought one of them captured me better well, the other less so," the actor remarked puckishly.

Also knighted yesterday was Frank Williams, owner of the Williams Formula One team, for services to motor racing. Angus Fraser, the Middlesex and England seam bowler, received his MBE insignia for services to cricket.

As he had his photograph taken in his own right? Sir Humphrey was already knighted, so that was nice. I also played King George III, but I didn't get crowned

today," Sir Nigel also confessed that being knighted was a good deal less stressful than waiting to hear if one had won an Oscar. "The Academy Awards are very disconcerting because you are in competition. This, on the other hand, is an awards ceremony among friends, because you know you've already got it."

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## KATHLEEN NOTT

Kathleen Nott, critic, novelist and poet, died on February 20 aged 94. She was born on February 19, 1905.

**A**lthough she published both poetry and novels, it is perhaps for her critical and philosophical works that Kathleen Nott will be principally remembered. Her training at Oxford had been in philosophy, and it was in analytical rather than creative literature that her severely rational mind found its best expression.

Kathleen Nott always knew exactly what she wanted to say, and was notable for her robust attacks on ideas with which she felt herself to be in fundamental conflict. Her most full-blooded and best-known work of this type was *The Emperor's Clothes* (1954), in which she attacked what she saw as the religious "dogmatic orthodoxy" of T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, C. S. Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers.

True, she could be as dogmatic as the dogman she attacked, and a contemporary reviewer of *The Emperor's Clothes* complained: "Miss Nott would be more persuasive if she were not so crotchety."

But this crotchettiness was of a piece with her intellectual being. There was something essentially masculine and combative about her mind. And reviewers of her verse always seemed to find themselves remarking on its "masculine" qualities.

Kathleen Cecilia Nott was born in South London, though she always liked to stress the Celtic component of her parentage: "one half Cornish, the other Irish". She was educated at Mary Datchelor School, London, and King's College, London, which she left after a short period to take up an Open Exhibition at Somerville College, Oxford.

The scholarship was in English literature, but with the stubbornness which was to characterise her later life she decided that there was no point in reading the subject. Philosophy appealed far more to the scientific humanism of her mental makeup and she switched to philosophy, politics and economics as soon as she arrived at Oxford.

But she found plenty to quarrel with in the philosophical diet offered, too. Alongside ethics and psychology she



Nott as a philosopher, dogmatic, as a poet, rich and muscular

wandered, in her spare time, in the realms of Dante and French literature.

At Oxford she met Christopher Bailey, whom she subsequently married. His work in electronics and, later, computers took them abroad to Germany before the war, during which he was involved with government scientific work.

During the depression years of the 1930s she worked as a social worker and clinical psychologist among the poor of the Jewish East End, and the experience gained there gave rise to her first novel, *Mile End*, which was published in 1938.

This was set not amid such contemporary events as the Mosley fascists marches, as might have been expected, but in an earlier era — beginning with the dilapidated and badly run lodging

the dock strike of 1889 and ending in the middle of the First World War. It was much admired for Non's grasp of various facets of the Jewish temperament and the psychological sway of Jewish religious lore on ordinary lives. Reviewers acknowledged at the same time that the creative impulse tended too often to be in thrall to the author's formidable intellectual control and analytical precision.

Non published three more novels. *The Dry Deluge* (1947) was a Biblical semi-science-fiction fantasy which depicted a community retiring from the outside world and engaged in the scientific pursuit of fending off death. *Private Fires* (1961) was a critique of contemporary society's ills, set amid the dilapidated and badly run lodgings

houses of South London. Her last novel, *An Elderly Retired Man* (1963), is her best. Its study of the perplexities, personal failures, broodings and partial successes of the protagonist of the old achieved a subtlety and richness that eluded her more analytical works. And its account of a bid for independence from the limitations of old age and the domination of another individual — in this case the protagonist's wife — recalled Henri de Montherlant.

From soon after the war Non had been publishing verse, too. *Landscape and Departures* (1947) announced a new voice: skillful and confident, able to express its thought in pliant, rhythmic language, full of stark and often physical imagery. A TLS reviewer commented on her "rich, harsh and muscular talent".

*Poems from the North* (1956) demonstrated something of the same quality, but without the intensely personal feeling that had given *Landscape and Departures* its impact. *Creatures and Emblems* (1960) was her last volume of verse. Although it still demonstrated the familiar energy, it suggested, in its relative lack of concentration, that her true interest was now in other forms of literary self-expression. She continued to be interested in poetry, as a vice-president of the English Centre of PEN International. But her later work was prose.

*A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* was a critique of Swedish society, a country to which she had accompanied her husband when he went to work there. It was published in 1960, by which time their marriage had been dissolved. Subsequent critical-philosophical works were *A Soul in the Quad* (1969), a study of the relationship between poetry and philosophy as she experienced it in her own life and writings; *Philosophy and Human Nature* (1970); and *The Good Want Power*, subtitled *An Essay on the Psychological Possibilities of Realism* (1977).

From 1964 Kathleen Non threw herself into her work for PEN as editor of its *Bulletin of Selected Books* (now *Pen International*) and was President of English PEN, 1974-75. She continued to edit *Pen International* until 1989. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1977. There were no children of her marriage.

Trevor Saunders, Professor of Greek at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, died of cancer on January 24 aged 64. He was born on July 12, 1934.

**TREVOR SAUNDERS** was one of the world's leading Platonists, and one of this country's best-known classicists. As head of the classics department at Newcastle University (1976-82 and 1987-92), he presided over a period of marked change and, with the classics under general attack, ensured that they survived and flourished at Newcastle.

Though he had been first appointed in a very different atmosphere, he showed a remarkable ability to play all the new games without compromising his academic values. He was the kind of academic without whom universities could not function, and who are nowadays all the more necessary if such institutions are to remain what they should be, communities of scholars run by themselves.

Born and bred in Wiltshire, Trevor John Saunders won a scholarship from Chippenham Grammar School to University College London in 1953, and it was there that he was received into the Roman Catholic faith which sustained him throughout his life, and met the wife to whom he remained happily married for nearly forty years. After taking a first in classics, he went on to take a doctorate at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and was subsequently assistant lecturer in Latin at Bedford College, London (1959-61) and assistant lecturer and then lecturer in classics at Hull (1961-65). In 1965 he was appointed to a lectureship at Newcastle upon Tyne, where he rose to a chair in Greek in 1975.

At one time or another he

PROFESSOR  
T. J. SAUNDERS

[Oxford, 1991]. This earned him even more widespread respect among Plato scholars, and he was gratified to find his views frequently cited and vigorously debated at two international conferences on the *Laws* which he attended shortly before his death.

His other main publication was a translation of and commentary on the first two books of the *Politics* for the Clarendon Aristotle Series (1993).

His contributions to Penguin classics made him known to a wide audience. In addition to translating Plato's *Laws*, he revised and re-presented T. A. Sinclair's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (1981) and contributed to the general introduction to *Early Socratic Dialogues* (1987), himself trans-

lating the *Ion*. These publications are in the more scholarly mould of the later volumes in the series, and combine meticulous scholarship with a sympathetic awareness of non-specialist readers, a ready turn of phrase, and a lively sense of humour. These last qualities also characterised his numerous articles and reviews.

His considerable output was not achieved at the expense of leaving the increasing burdens of administration to others. Among the many offices he held, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts (1982-83), an elected member of the Senate (1977-80 and 1988-91) and of the Council (1984-87 and 1989-92). He was invariably well-prepared for committee meetings, and he put his points with a patient cogency which always commanded respect.

As a lecturer and teacher, he was admired for his lucidity and wit, and loved for the care and attention he gave to individual students. One of his chief concerns, in his last days, was that he might be letting them down.

Outside academic life, his two main passions were railways and the cinema. It was a family joke that holidays had to be arranged with the former in mind, and it was even rumoured that external examining in Wales was an excuse for visits to obscure stations and track. This interest was wonderfully evoked at his cremation, which ended with the sound of one of his beloved steam engines pulling the last train to leave Wisburn on the Wansbeck line.

As a film buff, he had an electric taste, an eye for the telling visual detail, and for so gentle and kindly a man, a curious liking for some of the darkest and most violent of recent productions. He is survived by his wife, Teresa, and two daughters.

## JOHNNIE JOHNSON

Johnnie Inhester, journalist, died on February 10 aged 84. He was born on April 13, 1914.

FEW Fleet Street sub-editors can have worked on as many national titles as Johnnie Johnson. He was the chief sub at *The News Chronicle* until it folded in October 1960 and was later chief sub at *The Financial Times*, but he had

also worked on the *Daily Dispatch*, *The Times*, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Sun* and *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Johnson was also the man who saved the Press Club after it failed in 1986, reviving it as the London Press Club. The club's committee made a presentation to him at the end of last year to celebrate his fifty years as a member.

Born in Norfolk, John le Neve Johnson was educated at Bedford Modern School and tried his hand at landscaping before joining the *Hants & Sussex County Press*. He was appointed editor of the paper at the age of 23 in 1937, and he remained there until he joined up in the Artists' Rifles in September 1939. He was commissioned into the East Lancs Regiment in 1940.

On demob in 1945, he became a sub on the *Sheffield Star* and then joined the *News Chronicle* via the *Daily Dispatch*, *Daily Express*, and the *Daily Mirror*.

The shock of the closure of the *News Chronicle* in October 1960 was made worse by the lack of any pension provision even for senior members of staff. But Johnson — who for the next 36 years helped to

organise the annual reunions of *New Chronicle* writers — had a subbing job on the *Daily Mail* by Christmas. He then also freelanced at *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*. After the *Daily Mail* merged with *The Sketch*, however, he was once more made redundant. He spent a year on *The Times* and then became chief sub on the *Financial Times* where he remained until he retired in 1979.

He then worked as a freelance for a host of other titles,

and in the early 1990s he edited *Dear Sir*, a magazine made up entirely of readers' letters. In 1994, aged 80, Johnson became a columnist in *Lifewise*, a newspaper for retired people.

Johnnie Johnson will be remembered particularly for his amazing energy in keeping alive the spirit of the Press Club.

George Westropp, the chairman of the London Press Club for nine years until last month, said: "Within days of the old club closing its doors in the International Press Centre, Johnnie and some of the other members met in the 'Mucky Duck' to find a way forward. It seemed impossible to him that London could be without a Press Club, but I do not exaggerate when I say that it would not have one today without him."

He and his wife Bunty often worked seven days a week on London Press Club matters right up to his death in hospital. His devotion to the ideal of the club and his focus and energy in getting things done were remarkable. A life member of the NUJ, Johnnie Johnson was also devoted to St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, where he was a guildswoman.

Johnnie Johnson is survived by his wife, whom he married during the war, and by two daughters, one of whom is editor of *The Hexham Courant*.

## PERSONAL COLUMN

## DEATHS

WILLIAMSON OSWALD - Ingley Margaret Anne Major, second daughter of Brigadier General O. C. Williamson OBE, died on March 1 at Hither Green Crematorium, Verden Lane, London SE6. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Royal British Legion, Friends Chapel and Sons, 5 Thomas Street, Woolwich, SE18 6SA. Tel 0181 854 0285.

## IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE

BAGNALL - George. Everyone you love, loves and misses you.

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# THE TIMES TODAY

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

## NEWS

### Blair begins battle for the euro

■ Tony Blair yesterday set Britain on a course that could see the end of sterling within five years. He prepared the stage for one of the biggest political battles of the century by launching a 30-month campaign to persuade the country that it should enter the European single currency. In a marked shift of gear, the Prime Minister gave business the signal of the Government's intent to take Britain into the euro if the economic conditions are right. .... Pages 1, 10, 11

### Seven die in Austrian avalanche

■ A huge avalanche swept through an Austrian ski resort, killing at least seven people and burying up to 40 others beneath thousands of tons of snow. Rescuers in the Tyrolean community of Galtür were frantically trying to reach the trapped as darkness fell. Several were pulled out alive. .... Pages 1, 4

### Lawrences set to sue

The family of Stephen Lawrence is expected to launch a civil action for damages against the Metropolitan Police. .... Pages 1, 5

### MP leaked arms file

The arms-to-Africa affair dealt another blow to Robin Cook when a Labour MP on the inquiry committee resigned after admitting he had leaked a copy of its findings to the Foreign Secretary. .... Page 2

### Colonials honoured

The courage of millions of soldiers from India, Africa and the Caribbean who volunteered to fight for the British Empire will be saluted with commemorative gates to be erected beside Buckingham Palace. .... Page 3

### Mother 'left on floor'

A woman who left her mother lying on the floor for a week after she collapsed appeared in court yesterday charged with manslaughter. .... Page 6

### Profiler stalked

Professor David Canter, one of Britain's leading criminal psychologists, told a court of campaigners of harassment from his former secretary, who threatened to destroy his career. .... Page 7

### Aged home tragedy

Two retired doctors lost the will to live after being told that the Red Cross residential home they had founded 50 years ago was to close, relatives said. .... Page 7

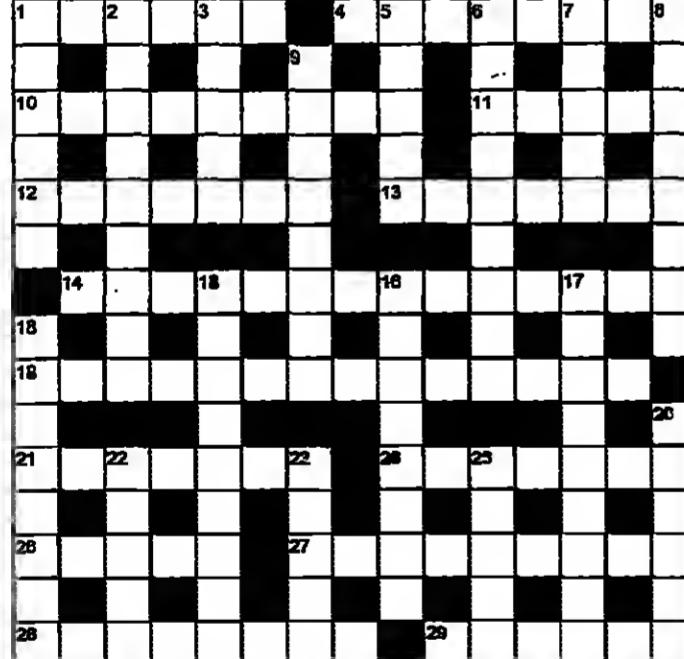
### Bush for President

At least half of America's Republican governors are ready to endorse the White House ambitions of George W. Bush. .... Page 16

### Denim no longer fits the legend

Jeans, once the uniform of youth, are now a badge of middle age — and London Fashion Week provides clear evidence that among the fashionable, denim is dead. As Levi Strauss closed half its factories and axed 6,000 jobs after sales slumps this week, the only jeans wearers at the shows were overweight techies and forty-something men with balding heads.... Page 9

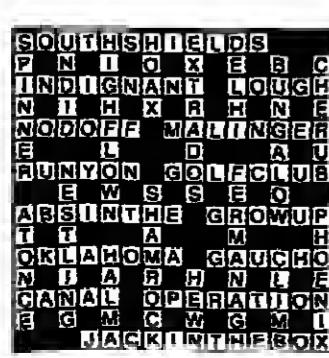
## THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,035



### ACROSS

- Giving publicity to one boxing? (6)
- No longer keen on pure cream (3-5)
- Such trees are barely recognisable in winter (9)
- Tobacco fraud (5)
- Cutery in military store (7)
- There are two points he can possibly raise (7)
- Nick's lawyer? (6,8)
- Wild flowers that aren't common (5-3-6)
- Senior accountant's holiday spot (7)
- Composer goes to court for judgment (7)
- Oil producer under pressure has a heart of stone (5)

Solution to Puzzle No 21,034



- Stop injured miner going into gallery (9)
- Such tolerance may be a matter of degree (8)
- Mini that's still unwrapped? (6)

### DOWN

- One habitually taking things did wrong in law (6)
- A spinner of yarn can — true or false? (9)
- A touching reminder (5)
- American in charge of the match (5)
- Guard what one says — a good maxim (9)
- Nine getting half ration — he got revolutionary punishment (5)
- Well held? (8)
- Absconding child makes mischief (6-2)
- Rebel against authority gets run in, perhaps (9)
- Release a shipment (8)
- Blend of main races (9)
- Well-known firm in footwear (8)
- Be there at the start and finish (6)
- Pot roast? (5)
- Played first part of hymn in a modern recording (5)
- Check key in, as a rule (5)

Times Two Crossword, page 48

**Weather**  
UK Weather - All regions 0336 442 910  
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410  
UK Rail 0336 401 420  
M25 and Left Roads 0336 401 429  
Northern Motorways 0336 401 782  
Motorway Information 0336 401 783  
Channel crossings 0336 401 992  
Hearing in Headphones 0336 407 507

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World City Weather 0336 401 994  
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For general info & day forecasts 0336 401 995  
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## Paris pays tribute to Hockney

Arts, page 38

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# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

Act of pure irony  
Arts, page 37

# George fears conflict if Bank is forced to converge rates

By ALASDAIR MURRAY  
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

EDDIE GEORGE, the Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday warned the Government that there was "potential for conflict" if it forced the Bank of England to converge British and European interest rates in preparation for membership of EMU.

Mr George also told the Treasury Select Committee that there are still considerable risks to the health of the global economy with the "extraordinary buoyancy" of the US economy in particular vulnerable to a substantial slowdown.

However, the Governor rejected a claim from DeAnne Julius, an independent member of the Monetary Policy committee who was also appearing before the committee, that the Bank may have made a mistake in raising rates during the first part of last year. He claimed that the Bank's sudden shift in policy last autumn was driven by a "pretty dramatic" deterioration abroad.



Eddie George at the committee yesterday

Mr George's comments were later echoed by Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who gave warning that although the US economy was performing "admirably" a tightening labour market and financial turmoil abroad posed big risks to US growth.

Mr Greenspan questioned whether US shares were overvalued. International stock markets, however, largely shrugged off Dr Greenspan's comments with the Dow Jones industrial average in New York holding

firm after Monday's 200-point gain. In London, the FTSE 100 recorded its second-highest closing level to date, climbing 85.3 points to 6,152.2. French and German markets also made substantial gains.

Mr George, who was speaking ahead of the publication of the Government's National Changeover Plan, left MPs in no doubt that the Government still faces formidable obstacles to joining the euro. He insisted that the Bank could find it difficult to continue to meet the Govern-

ment's inflation target if it was also obliged to reduce interest rates towards European levels.

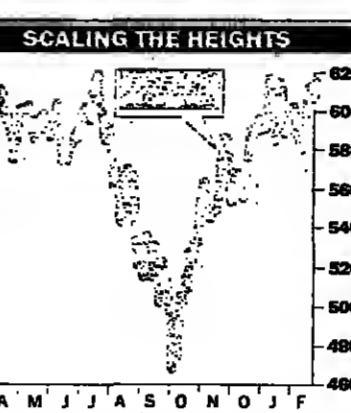
"I would think the potential for conflict was quite high," Mr George said. Although the Bank of England has made substantial cuts in interest rates in the past few months, British rates still stand at 5.5 per cent, compared with just 3 per cent in the eurozone.

The Governor said the Bank had no plans in place for a changeover to the euro and there was "not a shred of

truth" in claims that the Bank is already trying to reduce rates towards European levels.

British inflation calculated using the European measure, which does not include items such as owner-occupied housing, stands at just 1.6 per cent compared with 2.6 per cent for the target measure and 2.4 per cent for overall inflation.

Commentary, page 27



Source: Department for Economic Affairs

NatWest breaks through the £2bn barrier

By CAROLINE MERRELL  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NATWEST brought further cheer to the upbeat British banking sector yesterday when it reported profits that broke through the £2 billion level for the first time.

Pre-tax profits for 1998 exceeded City expectations, reaching £2.1 billion against £975 million for 1997, although those figures had been reduced by £706 million of losses from NatWest Markets, its former investment banking arm.

Even then the 1998 figures were dented by a £100 million provision for pensions mis-selling, relating to the second stage of the mis-selling review.

Bad debt provisions in emerging markets fell by 27 per cent, reaching £2.3 billion. Derek Wanless, chief executive, said: "We have reduced our exposure to counterparties and customers in emerging countries over the past year. We have taken £86 million of additional specific provisions in respect of customer and bank loans in Asia and Russia."

Mr Wanless did admit that the banking group's restructuring plan, which included shedding 10,000 jobs, has fallen behind schedule.

Instead of completion by next year as was planned, the restructuring will not be completed until 2001. He emphasised that the bank was continuing to bring down costs. He said: "NatWest's costs in 2000 will be lower than in 1997."

On possible acquisitions, Mr Wanless said that at present the bank preferred to concentrate on developing its own businesses.

There are plans in place around the group in terms of each of the individual businesses to improve efficiency and effectiveness," he said.

"We have not seen anything that in our view is value from a shareholder point of view," he added.

The group proposed a final dividend of 24.2p, giving a total dividend of 36p, up 11.8 per cent on the previous year. The shares reacted positively climbing 45p to £13.19.

Tempus, page 28

Business Today

Commentary: Not so fast, Mr Blair  
Stock Markets: Close to record high  
Equity prices: 33  
Unit trusts: 30



Ready for the euro?

Single currency would put unconverted in a spin

Page 29

STOCK MARKET INDEXES

FTSE 100 6156.2 (+85.3)

FTSE All Share 12012.38 (+32.41)

Nikkei 14500.85 (+243.95)

New York 9584.41 (+15.73)\*

S&P Composite 1273.14 (+3.30)\*

LINKS

WEBSITE: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

DEBT MARKETS

Federal Funds 4% 2/87 (4%)

Long bond 5.42% 1/93 (5.3%)

Yield 5.42% 1/93 (5.3%)

LIBOR - LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank 5.7% (5%)

Bank rate/govt future (Mar) 117.86 (117.57)

LIBOR - STERLING

New York 1.6140\* (1.6263)

London 1.6113 (1.6207)

3-month 1.6074 (1.6107)

SEF 2.3391 (2.3526)

Yen 195.28 (195.25)

Euro 101.8 (101.9)

SPOT - DOLLAR

London 1.6294\* (1.6327)

SEF 1.6502\* (1.6507)

Yen 121.30\* (121.23)

Yen index 108.1 (107.5)

Tokyo close Yen 120.35

NORTH SEA OIL

Brunei 511.05 (\$10.75)

GOLD

London close \$267.45 (\$267.25)

\* denotes midday trading price

Exchange rates Page 28

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At The Live Centre CORBY

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

UNILEVER, the Anglo-Dutch food and soap company, launched the largest cash return to shareholders yesterday in the form of a £5 billion special dividend. Niall FitzGerald, Unilever's chief executive, admitted that the company had no use for the cash which amounts to 10 per cent of the total market value of the company.

The payout, which amounts to 66.13p per share, is almost equal to the £4.7 billion proceeds of the sale to ICI of the

Halifax investors protest at windfall

[HALIFAX shareholders protested yesterday at the way the bank's £1.5 billion capital repatriation programme had been presented as a windfall (Richard Miles writes).

Investors will receive a cash payment averaging £217 in June but many argue this will be more than offset by a corresponding reduction in the number of shares they hold.

Halifax plans to swap 37 shares in a new holding company for 40 of the existing flotation stocks.

specialty chemical businesses in 1997.

Mr FitzGerald said the company had promised to distribute the proceeds to investors if no big acquisitions were made within two to three years. However, he said that Unilever had been unable to find deals that would generate value for shareholders and he blamed the market for overpricing assets.

He said: "We don't need the money. Management ego creates great pressure to do deals

and we have looked very carefully at target companies. We believe that the values attached to many businesses are excessive. It is not sustainable."

Unilever's mammoth cash handout came as the company revealed a pre-tax profit, at constant exchange rates and excluding disposals, of £3.3 billion, an increase of 41 per cent over 1997. Operating margins move into double digits and the total ordinary dividend is increased by 27 per cent to 10.7p.

The company managed just 1 per cent sales growth in Europe due to the cool summer which hurt ice-cream sales but the company has restored Persil to lead position in the UK thanks to the success of its new laundry tablet. Unilever's US profits gained 14 per cent with strong growth in food and personal care products but the Asian crisis forced the company to sacrifice growth to protect margins and market share.

Unilever's cash distribution will be closely scrutinised by other companies, including Royal Dutch/Shell which has struggled to find a tax-efficient mechanism for returning capital to shareholders. Under Dutch law, paying shareholders could suffer a levy of up to 60 per cent on a cash handout.

Unilever's novel solution is the issue of a preference share to Dutch paying investors which will have a five-year life. However, the decision not to do a share buyback could penalise US investors who account for more than 20 per cent of Unilever. Under US rules any capital payment other than a buyback is treated as income and is therefore taxable.

Commentary, page 27  
Tempus, page 28



Niall FitzGerald promised to distribute proceeds of the sale of its specialty business to investors

BSkyB opens talks with Canal

By RAYMOND SNODDY  
MEDIA EDITOR

BSkyB, the satellite television group, has opened exploratory talks with Canal Plus, Europe's largest subscription television company.

While talks are believed to be at an early stage, looking at a wide range of options, they are understood potentially to include a full £14 billion merger.

Commentary, page 27  
Tempus, page 28

er of the two companies. Together, the two groups would be the dominant pay-TV player in Europe in terms of scale although they do not compete directly in any market.

BSkyB, which in News International, the owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake, is based wholly in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Previous attempts to break into continental Europe, particularly in

Germany, have come to nothing. Yesterday BSkyB shares rose by 3.5 per cent to close at \$364p, up 184p.

BSkyB declined to comment last night but Canal Plus, which has a total of 11 million subscribers in Europe, acknowledged that there had been talks. Any merger would inevitably attract close scrutiny from Brussels' Competition Commissioner Karel van Miert has taken a particular interest in issues of dominance in new media.

A merger would also involve football and sports rights issues. BSkyB has made a recommended £63 million offer for Manchester United, which is being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Canal Plus owns a top French club, Paris St Germain.

In his first ever interview, he told *Fortune* magazine about a number of his investments.

He holds short-term government bonds as well as some junk bonds and emerging market debt. In the equity part of the portfolio he holds telecommunications companies Liberty Media, TCI, Cox and USA Networks. He also owns a stake in Berkshire Hathaway, the investment company of Warren Buffett, a friend of Mr Gates.

Last year the fund manager justified his position as banker to the world's richest man by outperforming the Dow Jones industrial average rise of 17 per cent.

## Internet share frenzy fails to interest Gates

FROM OLIVER AUGUST  
IN NEW YORK

BILL GATES, the world's richest man, invested none of his money in Internet stocks and instead stuck to much safer government and corporate bonds.

The Microsoft founder, who is worth close to \$100 billion (£62 billion) owns \$10 billion in bonds and only \$500 million in shares. Another \$1 billion of his vast fortune is invest-

ed in private ventures such as property deals.

The biggest part of his wealth is still tied up at his software company. He owns a 20 per cent stake in the \$400 billion business. But for several years, Mr Gates has been selling Microsoft shares to diversify his investments.

The fund manager he picked to carry out his investing is Michael Larson, a complete unknown until now. Mr Larson, 39, has complete discre-

tion over Mr Gates's fortune, making him possibly the single most powerful investor on Wall Street.

There are only two hedge funds that are bigger in America, Soros and Tiger Management, both of which employ hundreds of people. Mr Larson was hand-picked by Mr Gates after a careful interview process during which Mr Gates checked each one of Mr Larson's 13 references.

## Warning on profit hits OAI

Shares in Oxford Asymmetry International (OAI) fell more than 10 per cent as the fast-growing supplier of chemicals to the pharmaceutical industry warned investors that it expects flat profits this year.

OAI shares fell back to 499p from 558p yesterday. Sales up 47 per cent to £14.9 million last year, are increasing rapidly, but the company is experiencing a number of growing pains.

### Merant decline

Merant, the software solutions company, reported net profit at \$3.2 million (£3.2 million) for the three months to January 31 (£10.8 million). The shares rose 5p to 146½p. Revenues were \$95.7 million (£100.9 million). Earnings per share were 4 cents (7 cents).

### Pearson

We have been asked to point out that the Exel business that Pearson has sold to Primark for £19 million does not include Exshare which generates about 75 per cent of revenues of the Exel business Pearson acquired in 1994.

### EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$.....	21.23	19.57
Austria Sch.....	62.62	59.25
Canada \$.....	2.533	2.546
Cyprus Cyp E.....	0.8959	0.8236
Denmark Kr.....	11.52	10.23
Egypt L.E.....	5.75	5.60
Finland M.K.....	9.28	8.54
France Fr.....	10.11	9.23
Germany Dm.....	3.685	3.216
Greece Dr.....	5.01	4.62
Hong Kong \$.....	13.32	12.12
Iceland.....	1.25	1.09
India Ru.....	11.78	10.26
Indonesia Rb.....	1.2128	1.1226
Israel Shek.....	8.69	6.23
Italy Lira.....	30.22	27.65
Japan Yen.....	20.65	19.20
Malta L.....	0.665	0.610
New Zealand \$.....	3.431	3.136
Norway Kr.....	13.15	12.39
Portugal Esc.....	307.34	285.31
S Africa Rand.....	10.65	9.72
Spain Peseta.....	22.00	20.00
Sweden Kr.....	13.88	12.78
Switzerland Fr.....	2.499	2.261
Turkey Lira.....	585293	547008
USA \$.....	1.715	1.676

Rates for small demands. Banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as of close of trading yesterday.

# Wimpey sets strong growth targets as profit rises 35%

By ROBERT COLE  
CITY CORRESPONDENT

GEORGE WIMPEY, the housebuilder, has set itself ambitious targets to lift UK revenues by 50 per cent over the next five years and to double US sales.

The targets were set out as Wimpey reported a 35 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £85 million in 1998 (£63.1 million).

Yesterday's results were the last to be delivered by Joe Dwyer, Wimpey's long-serving chairman. Executive con-

trol of the group is passing to Dennis Brant, chief executive. He said he wanted to see the operating profit margin in one of its two UK housing companies — called Wimpey Homes — rise from 7.8 per cent to at least 10 per cent in two years. Last year margins in that segment widened 16 per cent to 6.7 percent.

Wimpey's second UK division, McLean Homes, already has operating profit margins of 11.4 per cent. Mr Brant said he wanted to maintain these margins. Wimpey is also pre-

paring to extend its US operations, which trades as Morrison Homes, by opening three new sales offices in Florida.

Helped by the release of US tax losses from previous years, Wimpey's earnings grew 46 per cent to 17.6p a share in the year just ended. The final dividend is 3.0p, making 6p for the year (5.7p). The shares rose 2.5p to 133p yesterday.

Beazer, a rival housebuilder, also unveiled financial results yesterday. But in stark contrast to the strength shown by Wimpey, Beazer reported a

15 per cent decline in profits, blaming delays in several planning applications for the fall.

Beazer earned £26.6 million in the six months to December 31 (£31.4 million). The planning delays meant Beazer had fewer completed properties available for sale. It also increased the amount of money Beazer had tied up in working capital.

However, Dennis Webb, chief executive, insisted that the planning problems had only delayed building work and left the company in better shape for the future.

Both Wimpey and Beazer reported that their average selling prices increased, but attributed the rises to a change in the mix of properties sold, rather than because of any substantial growth in comparable selling prices.

Both firms are scaling more bigger houses.

Earnings at Beazer declined 16 per cent to 1.7p a share. The interim dividend, however, was lifted 9 per cent to 2.5p. The shares fell 24p to 166p.

Tempus, page 28

## War chest at Irish Permanent

By RICHARD MILES

IRISH PERMANENT, which has agreed a merger with Irish Life to form the Republic's third-largest financial services company, said yesterday it had a war chest of more than £1300 million (£260 million) to spend on acquisitions.

Reporting a 21 per cent rise in 1998 pre-tax profits to £66.7 million, Roy Douglas, chief executive, said the group could spend between £1300 million and £1400 million on a deal. He also confirmed interest in buying the state-owned ICC Bank, likely to be privatised later this year.

Permanent, the country's top mortgage lender, said it expected to complete its £12.8 billion merger with Irish Life by the end of April, bringing it closer to market leaders Allied Irish Banks and the Bank of Ireland.

The company said total new lending in 1998 leapt 38 per cent to £1.5 billion. Net interest margins improved, as did its other income revenues. Cost-income ratio fell to 51.5 per cent from 54.8 per cent. Permanent will pay a total dividend of 19.5p per share, a rise of 13.4 per cent.



John Randall leaves with a £45,000 payoff package. He had been at MFI for 20 years

## Randall ousted at MFI

JOHN RANDALL has been ousted as chief executive of MFI, leaving the company after 20 years with a £45,000 payoff package. His departure was announced as the troubled furniture retailer issued another profit warning (Fraser Nelson writes).

Derek Hunt, chairman, told Mr Randall that the board had lost confidence in him. John Hancock, the US director of W.H. Smith, is to become

the new chief executive — two months after joining MFI as a non-executive director.

Mr Hunt, who is due to retire as chairman in September, said he may now be persuaded to stay on to oversee the change-over. He said: "I could not bear to leave the company without seeing it in the right hands."

Mr Hancock said he will be looking at a range of reforms, and has not ruled out dropping the MFI brand name in

an attempt to take it upmarket.

Mr Randall will receive £302,000 due from his 12-month contract and £152,000 in accrued pension payments.

His share options, exercisable at 115p and 120p, are worthless as the company's shares are now 36p, sliding 1p yesterday.

MFI said its underlying sales in the past four months are 14 per cent lower than last time.

Commentary, page 27

## Mortgage protection boost

By PAULA HAWKINS

THE Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) and the Association of British Insurers (ABI) yesterday announced minimum specifications for mortgage payment protection.

The move is intended to encourage more homeowners to insure themselves against the threat of illness or redundancy.

Under the guidelines, all accident, sickness and unemployment (ASU) policies will pay out after a maximum of 60 days and for no less than 12 months after that. Any changes to the cost or conditions of policies can only be made with six months' notice.

The standards will allow "fewer automatic exclusions for medical conditions", according to the CML.

There is also improved cover for self-employed people or those in part-time employment. Contract workers will be able to make claims provided they have worked for the same employer for a year, while the self-employed are covered provided they have filed for bankruptcy and have registered for the Job Seeker's Allowance.

The guidelines take effect from July 1 for new policies and July 1, 2001, for existing policies.

## First Technology in £89m US deal

FIRST TECHNOLOGY announced the \$145.1 million (£99 million) acquisition of America's Control Devices in a deal that unites two of the world's leading suppliers of vehicle safety products. The acquisition will be partly funded by a one-for-four rights issue of new First Technology shares at 320p each, raising £37.6 million. Existing shares fell 64p to 370p yesterday. Control Devices, whose shares are listed on Nasdaq, was the subject of a management buyout from GTE in 1996. In the last financial year it earned net income of \$7.9 million, up from \$5.9 million in the previous 12 months.

A number of shareholders of Control Devices, including senior managers, will subscribe for new First Technology shares worth £4.9 million. First Technology, which is capitalised at about £180 million, said yesterday that trading was most satisfactory, with group sales from continuing operations exceeding last year's levels. More than 90 per cent of First Technology's sales are made outside the UK.

## Croda dividend move

CRODA INTERNATIONAL, the speciality chemicals group, yesterday said that its 1998 pre-tax profit would be in line with general market expectations, which stand at about £32 million. The company also said it would bring forward payment of its final dividend of 6.8p from July 1 to April 1. This will enable Croda to class the payment as a foreign income dividend, which brings tax advantages that are due to be abolished on April 6. The shares rose 5p to 261½p.

## Allied merger nears

ALLIED LEISURE, the ten-pin bowling and Burger King restaurants operator, confirmed that it is in merger talks with European Leisure, the nightclubs and cue sports group. As *The Times* reported last week, the two are discussing a nil-premium merger, although analysts expect Allied's directors to control the new board. A deal could be announced next week. The market welcomed the news, with Allied's shares gaining 2p to 27½p and European closing 1½p higher at 70p.

## Kvaerner into the red

KVAERNER, the Anglo-Norwegian shipping and engineering group, reported pre-tax losses of 1.35 billion crowns (£105 million) against profits last year of 1.51 billion crowns, sending the company's shares tumbling by more than 6 per cent on the Oslo bourse. Kjell Almskog, president, said: "These unsatisfactory results reflect very negative business developments for Kvaerner in 1998. The year was marked by decline in our main markets and a change of management and of priorities."

## Vymura prospects lift

VYMURA, the wallpaper manufacturer, saw its shares rise 10½p to 73½p as it reported a good start to 1999. Pre-tax profit for the year ended December 31 was £3.2 million, down from £5.1 million, but ahead of market expectations. Turnover was £40.6 million (£41 million). Andrew Gately, the chairman, said that sales in January were ahead of budget, and he expects "opportunities for sales growth". Earnings per share were 9.4p (11.2p) and the final dividend of 4p (3.8p) gives a total for the year of 5.7p (5.4p).

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## STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

## FTSE 100 comes within whisker of record high

**INVESTORS** had the bit between their teeth as the market came within a whisker of its record closing high.

Wall Street's continuing advance on the 10,000 level at the outset of trading fuelled the latest buying spree in London, although prices did close below their best levels of the day.

Even so, the FTSE 100 index touched 6,185.2 before eventually closing 85.3 higher at 6,155.2, just 23.8 short of its record close of 6,179.0, achieved in July last year.

Attention switched back to blue chip stocks with second-liners struggling to make headway. This was reflected in the FTSE 250 index which finished 5.7 up at 5,186.4. A total of 922 million shares changed hands.

Investor enthusiasm was also fuelled by the better than expected results from NatWest Bank, up 4p to £13.19, after briefly touching £13.78, and the £5 billion special payment for shareholders proposed by Unilever, up lighter at 624p, after hitting £581p.

There was also a positive response to final results from BG, up 3p to 364p, which revealed a strong final-quarter performance from its Transco division. The company announced plans to merge its exploration and production and downstream divisions but refused to comment on speculation that it might bid for either Lasmo, steady at 110p, or Enterprise Oil, 4p firmer at 230p.

CGU was a nervous market ahead of final results today falling 18p to 929p. Brokers are braced for a near-halfing of pre-tax profits to £500 million, although there should be scope for an increase in the dividend from 32p to 35p.

Vodafone received a welcome boost from Merrill Lynch, the broker, that sent the price climbing 33p to £11.72. It is still looking for a target price for the shares of ELS by the year end and has raised its profit forecast for 2000 to £1 billion followed by £1.42 billion in 2001. Merrill says the mobile phone market remains a growth area and forecasts that Vodafone could achieve 70 per cent market penetration by 2004.

A "buy" recommendation from BT Alex Brown, the broker, provided Gallaher with a rise of 3p to 423p. Tony Silverman at BTAB says the shares have underperformed



David Varney, chief executive, left, and Philip Hampton, finance director of BG, which closed 34p better at 364p

rival Imperial Tobacco, up 4p to 726p, by 16 per cent since October.

Some bullish comments from Morgan Stanley, the US securities house, bolstered Nycomed Amersham 21p to 525p. It rates the shares a "strong buy" and has raised its target price from 460p to 525p.

Price war worries left Tescos up lighter at 172p ahead of a

meeting with brokers. The company has just announced price cuts on a number of leading lines estimated to be worth £60 million. Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, says the move by Tesco is bad news for the rest of the sector. Somerfield Sp to 290p up and Morrison Supermarkets 41p to 315p.

Ladbrokes rose 1p to 272p as

confirmation that it was in talks to take over its rival. It rates the shares a "buy" and has raised its target price from 460p to 525p.

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## **Equities close off best levels**

**TRADING PERIOD:** Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

كتاب عن الأصل

## Controlling shareholder can be employee

**Secretary of State for Trade and Industry v Lord Woolf**, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Maitland [Judgment February 12]

A controlling shareholder of a company could also be an employee of the company who was entitled under the Employment Rights Act 1996 to recover from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry money owed by the company when it became insolvent.

The Court of Appeal held in a reserved judgment dismissing the appeal of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry against the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal (Mr Justice Morison, President, Mr A.C. Blythton and Mrs R. Chapman) [1998] ICR 564 to uphold the decision of the industrial tribunal that Mr Peter Bottrell was entitled to claim a payment from the secretary of state under section 184 of the 1996 Act.

Mrs Jennifer Eady for the secretary of state; Mr Martin Barklem for Mr Bottrell.

**THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS**, giving the judgment of the court, said that whether a person who was a controlling shareholder of a company could also be an employee of that company for the purposes of the 1996 Act was an issue on which there had been conflicting previous decisions.

In *Buchan v Secretary of State for Employment* [1997] IRLR 80 the Employment Appeal Tribunal had decided that a controlling shareholder could not be an employee for that purpose.

**10 Fleming v Secretary of State for Trade and Industry** [1997] IRLR 682 the Inner House of the Court of Session did not apply *Buchan* and had decided that a controlling shareholder could be an employee.

Whether he was an employee or not depended all the circum-

stances. A similar view had been taken by the appeal tribunal in the present case.

The significance of the issue was that if the controlling shareholder was an employee, then upon any of the conditions specified in section 166(7) being satisfied, broadly speaking on insolvency, as an employee, the controlling shareholder was entitled to recover certain sums, which would otherwise be owing from the company, from the secretary of state in accordance with the provisions of the Act, including statutory redundancy payments (section 166), unpaid wages and holiday pay and money in lieu of notice, the basic award of compensation in respect of unfair dismissal and other payments, including protective awards, and money due for time taken off work for trade union duties, etc (section 184).

Having considered *Fleming* and *Buchan* the court had concluded that of the two approaches, it had no hesitation in preferring the approach in *Fleming*.

As the court understood the reasoning in *Buchan*, it was the ability of the shareholder to prevent his dismissal which was crucial and that in turn depended on the national insurance contributions had been paid, to deprive an individual of his claims under the Act could be to deprive unjustly that individual of the benefit to which he could properly be entitled after his and his "employer" had made the appropriate contributions.

The industrial tribunal had been entitled to conclude that there had been a genuine contractual relationship between Mr Bottrell and his company and, having carefully and properly weighed the competing factors, it had arrived at a conclusion which was unimpeachable on the facts.

The court accepted that if he was right in his view that the approach in law in *Buchan* was the most surprising when applied to a case such as the present when Mr Bottrell had been powerfully prevented to prevent his dismissal which triggered his claim.

The court recorded the circumstances having in relation to the Act a simple and clear test which would determine whether a shareholder or a director was an employee for the purposes of the Act or not. However, the Act did not provide such a test and it was far from obvious what Parliament would have intended the test to be.

The court did not find any justification for departing from the well-established position in the law of employment generally, that was whether Mr Bottrell's status as sole shareholder had only been temporary and any control which he had had of the company was

only theoretical. The actual control had been held by the American group.

The tribunal had laid stress on the facts that Mr Bottrell had paid national insurance contributions and tax as if he was an employee, had been entitled to sick pay, had been entitled to seek remedies against the secretary of state in some cases it might prove to be decisive.

However, it was only one of the factors which were relevant and certainly was not in itself to be taken as determinative without considering all the relevant circumstances.

Both *Fleming* and the appeal tribunal in the present case had made it clear that the scope for abuse was limited. The court would reaffirm their views as to the use of devices to seek remedies against the secretary of state in appropriate circumstances.

However, those cases apart, it was right in note that, in a case such as the present when national insurance contributions had been paid, to deprive an individual of his claims under the Act could be to deprive unjustly that individual of the benefit to which he could properly be entitled after his and his "employer" had made the appropriate contributions.

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only theoretical. The actual control had been held by the American group.

The first question which the tribunal was likely to wish to consider was whether there was or had been a genuine contract between the company and the shareholder.

In that context how far the reasons the contract had come into existence, for example, whether the contract was made at a time when insolvency occurred, and what each party actually did pursuant to the contract were likely to be relevant considerations.

If the tribunal concluded that the contract was not a sham, it was likely in which to consider next whether the contract, which might well have been labelled a contract of employment, actually gave rise to an employer/employee relationship.

In that context, of the various factors usually regarded as relevant, the degree of control exercised by the company over the shareholder employee was always important. That was not the same question as that relating to whether there was a controlling shareholding.

The tribunal might think it appropriate to consider whether there were directions other than or in addition to the shareholder employee and whether the company gave the shareholder rights such that he was in reality answerable only to himself and incapable of being dismissed.

If he was a director, it might be relevant to consider whether he was able under the articles of association to vote on matters in which he was personally interested, such as the termination of his contract of employment. Again, the actual conduct of the parties pursuant to the terms of the contract was likely to be relevant.

It was for the tribunal as an industrial tribunal to take all relevant factors into account in reaching its conclusion, giving such weight to them as it considered appropriate.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor, Shulmans, Leeds.

that the offence would be made out.

To allow acts of prostitution to take place on the premises would amount to a failure to maintain good order in the premises. It was not necessary to show conduct which would amount to a public order breach of the peace, or to show that the conduct was rowdy.

The statutory provisions or the rules did not create offences of strict liability. It was necessary to establish mens rea and therefore knowledge on the part of the licensee to maintain good order in the premises, what mattered was whether the licensee was aware of those activities.

It was in his Lordship's opinion immaterial whether anyone else overheard what was being offered, or was aware of it. See *R v McFarlane* [1994] QB 419, 424.

In deciding whether the offers made by the females, having been made discreetly to an individual without being overheard or anyone else being aware of such offers, could properly be said to amount to a failure on the part of the licensee to maintain good order in the premises, what mattered was whether the licensee was aware of those activities.

Since the magistrate expressly found that no one else, including, it must be assumed, the licensee, was aware of what was being offered, his Lordship did not see how it could be said that any breach of the rule had occurred. Accordingly, the magistrate was right in law.

Mr Justice Forbes agreed.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE,

agreed, added that the council would do well to tighten up the language of rule 9 if wished to be able to use it to prohibit such activities on licensed premises after the Human Rights Act 1998 comes into force, since the application of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (S.M. 1993, Cmnd 6969) would have the effect of prescribing that a criminal offence must be clearly defined.

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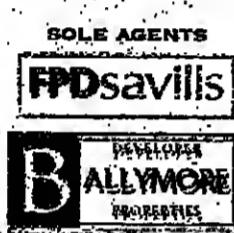
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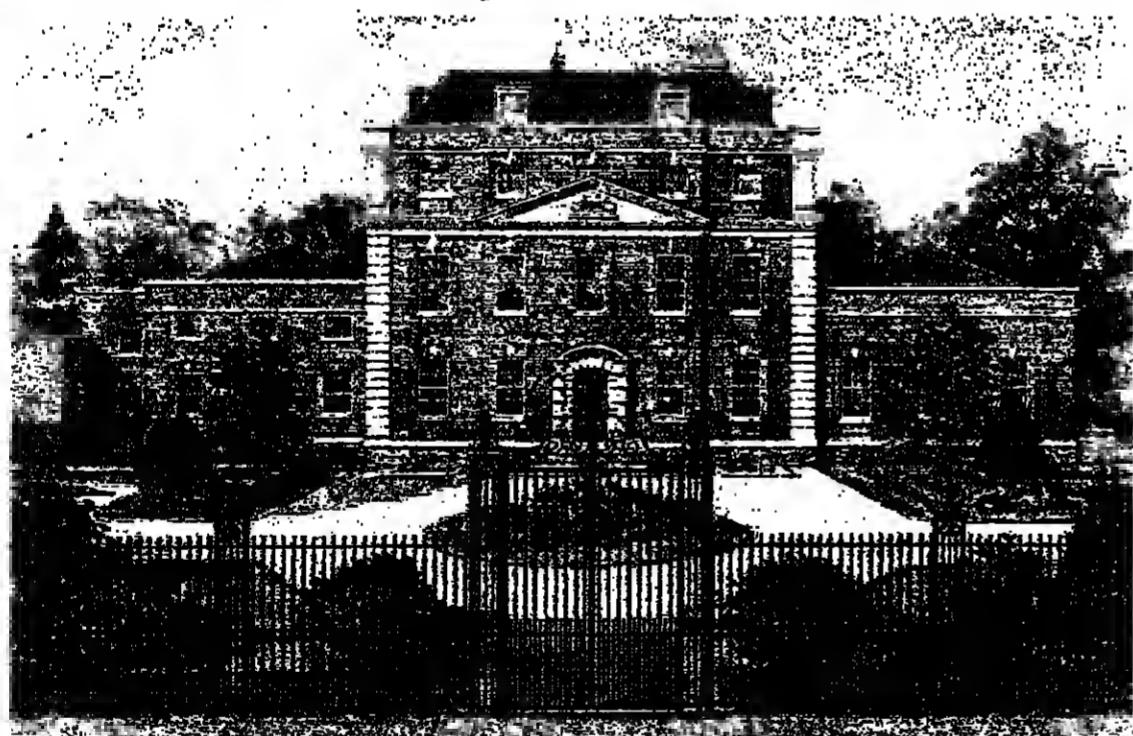


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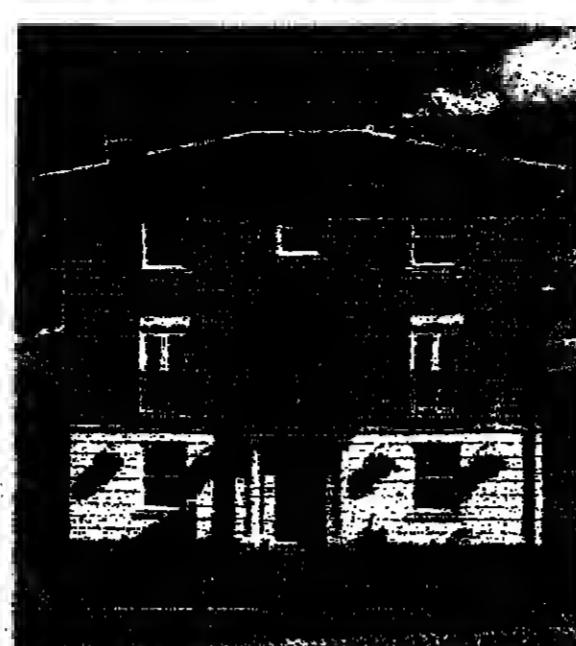
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DANCE

# THE TIMES ARTS

VISUAL ART



## Into his leap of honour

**DANCE:** Will Irak Mukhamedov's Don Juan presage his withdrawal from the stage? Interview by Allen Robertson

**T**oday we are all warned not to expect a job for life. But dancers have known this all along. They understand that the physical demands of their trade mean they will be quitting the limelight at the very point when other professionals hit their stride.

Irak Mukhamedov turns 39 next week. Yet, far from heading for the scrapheap, the Russian ballet star is about to be handed that most coveted of all dance trophies: a new full-length role created for him. Starting at Sadler's Wells on Monday, Mukhamedov will be playing the title character in *The Return of Don Juan* for Arc Dance Company. The gusto of his performance looks set to dispel the doomsday prophecies of a career in decline.

"I still dance 200 per cent every time," Mukhamedov insists. "Ballet is always young, but I have experience. I've been on stage for 20 years."

According to the choreographer Kim Brandstrup, the creative inspiration behind this new *Don Juan* is Mukhamedov's out-sized talent. A comedy set in a modern film studio, it has a plot loosely based on a Danish radio play from the 1930s. That sparked off a similarly obscure Ingmar Bergman opus, *The Devil's Eye* (1960). *Don Juan*, briefly let out of Hell, sets his sights on a virginal ingénue, "the only girl of unassailable virtue left in the world". In trying to seduce her, the Don makes the calamitous mistake of falling in love for the first (and last) time.

It is a perfect role for

Mukhamedov. Not only does he radiate masculine sexuality on stage, he also has an impish flair for comedy. "It is comic," he says, "but I hope the audience will cry a little bit too."

This is Mukhamedov's second created role for Arc: in 1994, he starred in Brandstrup's version of *Othello*. In the interim, Brandstrup has

talents. No one so dramatically evoked the torment of Crown Prince Rudolf in *Mayerling*, the ballet Mukhamedov was dancing that night in 1992 when MacMillan died backstage. It was a blow for Mukhamedov. The dancer believes that he and the Royal's chief choreographer were forming a great partnership.

Today his future is in flux. From this season he is a guest with the Royal Ballet rather than a full-time member, and Mukhamedov feels that Covent Garden has cut him adrift. "I'm a dancer who needs to be a part of a company. To be a guest is to be on the outside. But the Royal Ballet will survive. It survived without Rudolf Nureyev. It will survive without Irak Mukhamedov."

His immediate future includes guest appearances in Japan, Russia and Germany. He and Anthony Dowell, the Royal Ballet's artistic director, have also worked out what he will be dancing (as a guest once the company is back at Covent Garden next season). "I would like to dance as much as I can, as long as possible."

Away from the dance world he has the bedrock of his wife and two children, now eight and three. "When we finish talking now I will fly back to them in Bedfordshire. They will still be there when it is time to give up dancing, maybe sooner than I think. Who knows? I love driving. Maybe I could be a cabby."

• *The Return of Don Juan* is at Sadler's Wells (0171-963 8000) from Monday to Wednesday, then tours nationally until April 16

choreographed for several big classical ballet companies, including the Royal Danish. Mukhamedov feels that this has helped Brandstrup's style to grow. "I wish I could be a choreographer," the Russian dancer says, "but I know it is impossible. When I try to choreograph I get a headache. So when someone makes a ballet for me, I feel honoured."

A young superstar with the Bolshoi Ballet, lauded for his dynamism in blockbusters such as *Spartacus* and *Ivan the Terrible*, Mukhamedov and his second wife left Moscow for London nine years ago. He joined the Royal Ballet, where he has been ever since. The choreographer Kenneth MacMillan doted on his



Super trooper: at 39, Irak Mukhamedov still gives all his dancing "200 per cent"

## No sex means no cigar

**O**n way or another, it all comes down to sex. Without it, Carmen would be nothing but a common factory worker; without it, José would still be on the right side of the law and Micaela would be a happily married woman. And without it, we would not have our story. Did Veldman's new ballet for Northern Ballet Theatre, unveiled at the Grand Theatre in Leeds on Monday, knows this. But somehow her Carmen cannot quite bring itself to express this fundamental truth.

And yet virtually everything else about Veldman's production (sponsored by Halifax plc) is in place. The staging is excellent — the story is told lucidly and quickly with a strong sense of purpose. The scenario, devised by the late Christopher Gable, reimagines the tale setting it in contemporary Rio de Janeiro, and that works just fine. The designs, by the estimable Lez Broderston, capture the inner-city malaise of an industrial wasteland blighted by poverty and despair. The Bizet score, arranged by John Longstaff, is enthusiastically played by John Price-Jones and the Northern Ballet Theatre Orchestra. And Patricia Doyle's direction ensures excellent performances from a uniformly accomplished cast.

No, the problem is the choreography, which, despite its plain-spoken energy, does not show us a full-blooded tale of fatal attraction. Veldman's strength is in her writing for the ensemble. She animates the stage in well-defined social observation: the gangsters and crooks have a restless bravado; the factory girls are trapped by boredom and futility; the police officers evince a wooden devotion to duty.

When the opportunity arises to have some fun, Veldman takes it. She enjoys reinventing Escamillo as a rock star, and getting raunchy as the torero song is subjected to the full synthesized rock treatment.

Some of her vignettes are juicy, such as the robbery of two tourists by Carmen's gang, and Veldman responds well to the coarseness of Carmen's society, making clear that almost everything in it has its price. But the unsex democracy of the choreography works against Veldman when it comes to focusing on soloists. She doesn't have the language to make them special.

She never fully establishes



Daniel de Andrade (José), Charlotte Broom (Carmen)

the overpowering physical connection between Charlotte Broom's Carmen and Daniel de Andrade's José, so that when their final confrontation arrives, it comes almost as a dramatic non sequitur. The awkward and evasive consummation scene in Carmen's bedroom is far from sizzling and Veldman seems so intent on portraying Carmen as a tomboy that poor Broom seems stuck in a perpetual adolescence. Broom is an impressive dance-actress, but if the body language of the ballet is not screaming adult sexual allure, what is her Carmen to do?

DEBRA CRAINE

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CHANGING TIMES

## Bombast without bite

CONCERTS

**L**ondon has heard some fine performances of Mahler's mighty *Resurrection Symphony* recently, but none perhaps as over-impressive as this account by Myung-Whun Chung with the Royal Symphony Orchestra.

A packed Barbican Hall added to the sense of occasion, and with its concentration, vividness of orchestral playing and remarkably controlled singing it added up to something quite

special. But ultimately this huge impression was not enough, and the performance's failure to truly stirring pointed up the pitfalls of playing Mahler.

**Y**outhful fling on the wild side

A TIME there was when Thomas Adès was only a pianist: a BBC Young Musician finalist, a career as a soloist certainly beckoned. But that would have limited him, so he became a composer, and developed, in rapid succession, parallel careers as a conductor and artistic director. Still in his twenties, he has been appointed artistic advisor to the Aldeburgh Festival. And as if to underscore his credentials as heir to the Britten legacy came this Wigmore concert of classical chamber music.

The comparison may be pertinent. Britten was an exceptional pianist, but especially an exceptional accompanist. Beethoven's vast, soul-searching *Ghost Trio* requires something more than musicianship. Of course, Adès has this in spades: he cannot fail to be interesting, and his piano playing has the inner conviction and understanding of the composer-pianist. He is so interesting, in fact, that Mitsuko Uchida herself came to hear him. But what must she, a pianist with a capital P, have made of it? From the blizzard of notes in the rhusky opening, Adès led an exciting but hare-brained performance.

Admittedly, the excellent violinist Anthony Marwood — who would have given that vital shape to the ensemble — had flu, and was replaced by the fluent but often superficial Alexander Janacek. As Adès blazed forward, only cellist Louise Hopkins appeared to be trying to salvage an interpretation dragging them back in the Largo to make space for what should be hard-won crescendos. Under Adès' hands the great descending scales disappeared in a wash of pedal, only to rear up suddenly at the end.

More successful was the arresting Haydn E major Trio, HXV23. Here Adès could lead, and the ensemble cohered. The intriguing opening in which pizzicato notes pin down the wings of spread piano chords had hints of transparency, though Adès' relaxed speeds began to take their toll, and this funeral march became more funeral than march-like, hardly the *Allegro maestoso* that Mahler called for.

The dreamily escapist second movement, evoking the memory of a distant dance, turned out to be a slow-motion tour of a peasant hop with all the ill of the *Ländler* rhythms filtered out. The grim reality of the third movement was not really frightful enough, as the music's sardonic edge was softened by all too moderate tempos.

Strong vocal contributions put the performance back on course, especially the unearthly, disembodied entry of the Venetian Sara Mingardo in *Uriclif*. A true contralto, not a moonlighting mezzo, she sang with the glow of molten metal, and phrased seamlessly.

After an unsettled start, the Slovakian soprano Andrea Dankova also sang radiantly, showing off a small but glamorous voice. And the London Symphony Chorus, hushed at first and later full-throated, was on splendid form in the finale, which Chung controlled masterfully. The conductor's theatrical instinct showed in the way he steered it from the explosion of sound at the bursting of the graves towards an overwhelming climax.

HELEN WALLACE

Masterpieces of this size are open to many different interpretations, but this one, coming at the end of the LSO education programme's enterprising *Discovery Day*, was a little too indulgent. Mahler is at least partly about luxuriant sound, intricate detail and vulgar bombast, and Chung, conducting from memory, conjured up all these with a sure hand. Yet he missed the work's more severe and unsettling side.

Even at the slow tempos he adopted, Chung's pacing was secure. He shaped the work's biggest span, the death-into-life idea that arches over the entire work, with a certainty that disguised the symphony's fragmented gestation.

With its bristling tension, the opening promised much: as the movement developed a sense of both serenity and epic grandeur, all seemed to be in place for a compelling interpretation. But then Chung's relaxed speeds began to take their toll, and this funeral march became more funeral than march-like, hardly the *Allegro maestoso* that Mahler called for.

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JOHN ALLISON

## Riding on the rhythm

DAVID MURRAY'S recent projects have included everything from a collaboration with Senegalese musicians to an album celebrating his predilection for jamming with the Grateful Dead. So his Creole band, embracing the music of Guadeloupe, barely raises an eyebrow. Just two of the island's percussionists, *ka* drummer François Landresau and Klod Klaive on *ka* drum and congas, were actually present for this one-off appearance, but the American sonophonist let their playing form the basis of what he and his jazz-oriented colleagues played, rather than using it for a splash of rhythmic embellishment.

Klaive, indeed, provided Göté, a rousing percussive



opener with a rolling rhythm over which Murray, on tenor, and flautist James Newton played an infectious theme. Phewwa skiffle kept asserting the springy Caribbean rhythm while maintaining the supple looseness conducive to jazz improvisation. Throughout, both he and bassist Sami Debrimo fulfilled this role with great aplomb, pounding out lively, dancing rhythms that could be embroidered by the two hand-drummers and, simultaneously, provide a platform for Murray's multi-textured saxophone and Newton's near-ye intense flute.

Even the introduction of Guy Konkel did not faze the rhythm section. Konkel used his forceful baritone to great effect, chanting and declaiming over the chattering percussion and blending his voice, call-and-response style, with both Murray and Newton. Whether he or Landresau was singing, Murray's musical instincts ensured that the free adventurousness of the jazz element was allowed to flourish in this unusual setting.

CHRIS PARKER

# In the namesake of comedy

**H**aving never knowingly been in the company of anybody called Nuala, I found that this show allowed me to encounter three at the same time: two blonde and one brunette. It is the same distribution of hair tints that occurs in *Fascinating Alida*, so perhaps a showbiz rule requires all song'n'comedy girl threesome to be coloured thus. Nuala (rhymes with bula) may or may not be their real names, but it is what they call one another. Not even Tall Blonde Nuala or Shorter Blonde Nuala; just Nuala. "Nuala," says another Nuala, "will now sing *Bridget the Sun*, or *Kate Kali, the Girl with the Cabbage Head*." And Nuala begins, with Nuala and Nuala sharing the vocal backing or taking over from Nuala for verses two and three.

Being togged out in mid-thigh frocks of pink plush, these Irish twentysomethings sweetly sing of grotesque misfortunes, set to a lilting tune of the sort more usually found associated with the scenic beauties of Tralee. There is Curly, for example, whose green head made her feel so unwanted at school, until the day came when teacher fell down dead on an excursion to the Burren and Curly saved her classmates from starvation by letting them chew her from the neck up. This self-sacrifice was duly recognised by Rome and now she is the patron saint of vegetable plots.

The Nualas have mastered the deadpan delivery, the devilish irony that soon entices an audience into their world where men are bastards — of course, that comes with the territory — but where their bastardly antics are unusual, even for men. The songs must be composed by the methods of free association: start with a cycling nun, exhaust her, send her to Lourdes to be healed, slip her on the Tour de France — "Go, Bridget, go!" — and so on to glory.

## THEATRE

*The Nualas*

By JEREMY KINGSTON

Likewise the astonishing riff by brunettes Nuala, the one I first fixed in my mind as Scholarly Nuala, comparing woman looking for a man to a jug of ink waiting on the kitchen table. Various cups of tea arrive, keen to mix, but they're all bastards, and as time passes the description of her souring bentons becomes ever more graphic. To counter this comical attack on ten, there is the equally remarkable hymn in honour of the actor David Sutherland, not the most obvious object for three girls in plush — "You're Canadian but we don't find you boring at all."

At onetime the threesome looked as though each might stay within a consistent character role, the other two being Severe and Scatty. But though even Nuala continued to look stely at us and mutter complaints like her mate about the lighting, and though Scatty Nuala's hair became more frayed, any naive distinction between them would soon crumble. They share the narrative bits and a frank put-downs of showbiz celebs and each has a turn at introducing the songs with remarks something as comic as what follows.

Anorak in the front row, dressed curiously will have these features courteously pointed out. Identities may be listed upon us, such as the fellow nined as that great Irish jazz musical helionous Mahoney from *Co Mead*. I laughed a lot, and when they skipped off behind the glittering backdrof for the last time, I was truly sorry to leave them.

JEREMY KINGSTON



The Nualas: consummate exponents of the deadpan delivery and the devilish irony, delivered in triplicate

## Two double beddings

**T**wo people, a record company A&E man and a personnel manager, meet in a shabby hotel miles from nowhere. After initial hostilities...and fuelled by drink, they spend the night together, parting as strangers. In a parallel universe the same thing happens. Exactly the same circumstances, exactly the same result. But these two people react both to circumstances and each other differently, and what happens in between the beginning and the end of their almost identical encounters takes a different turn. Meanwhile, in another parallel universe...

And so the merry-go-round goes on in *Suspect*, Culture's latest dissection of relationships among what used to be called Generation X, the late-twenty and thirty-somethings for whom nothing is ever easy. Taking its cue from their last major work, the brilliant *Timeless*, which looked at the secrets and lies between four

*Mainstream*

Stuart

Kingston

friends, *Mainstream*, at the MacRobert Art Centre, feels back the layers of personal artifice even more than it leaves open late-night scenes and morning-after awkwardness we can all recognise. Simple enough exercise, but suspect culture like to make it difficult for themselves, in the dizzying permutations at result from having four aors play two characters less no avenue of intimacy unexplored.

Developed over a lengthy devising process, this is a typically immaculate work from the mo adventurous, most in-tur-with-the-times theatre company in Britain. As David Greig's crisp script jump-cuts between first meeting to final parting, the effect is akin to *Sliding Doors* as penned by Harold Pinter. The

four-strong acting ensemble of Callum Cuthbertson, Kate Dickie, Paul Thomas Hickey and Louise Ludgate are kept on their toes as they switch between time zones as well as characters, while other liaisons are glimpsed in a second playing area.

But it is the director Graham Eatough who appears to have left his signature all over *Mainstream*. All the stylistics from *Timeless* are here, including the heightened use of gesture and Nick Powell's gorgeously evocative soundscape, but they are used to even more personal effect as *Mainstream* explores the secret lives that go on behind the mask of a profession. Where the repetition of the piece could grate, it hypnotises and seduces you deep into the heart of this *Brief Encounter* for the end of the century. Something very similar is probably going on in a hotel room near you right now.

NEIL COOPER

I made that bit up, admits Christine Molloy, one half of the performance duo Desperate Optimists, about her assertion that just before he met that fatal icepick, Leon Trotsky had written the words "there must be another way".

It is a clear warning for the audience at *Play-Boy*, the company's tendentious evening of theatrical "tricottage" at the Project at the Mint, not to be too credulous. When it comes to history, you have to suspect your sources. But although Molloy and her partner, Jo Lawlor, are keen to offer such warnings, the pair still retain high expectations of their audience.

*Play-Boy* brings together chunks of other people's texts, videotaped interviews, a little mariachi song and some gunfire and a whole lot of fake blood in an effort to connect some ostensibly disparate facts and events of 20th-century history.

But if the show involves outlining intriguing and perplexing coincidences, Desperate Optimists are not joining up the dots for anyone. There

## Linking and thinking

*Play-Boy*

DUBLIN

may be a few hints about the links between the testimony of the film director Eli Kazan at the McCarthy hearings and the riots that accompanied the original Abbey production of John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, but the show still leaves plenty of room for an audience's mental participation.

Some things do become clear as the music plays and gunshots ring out. Violence is one of the key elements that unite the company's chosen texts, whether it be in Molloy's account of the murder of Trotsky, the video witnesses' dis-

cussions or the frequent ear-splitting reports of blanks fired on stage. A link also appears to be made between violence, colonialism and isolation. But somehow it is only when the urge to join all the dots begins to wane that the facts seem to speak freely. This is not an approach that a company can take on lightly, all the less so if the intention is to create something more than a multimedia seminar in cultural studies.

But the company's challenge is to make their discussions hold up in front of an audience with relatively straightforward expectations: that is to say, they have to make an evening of talking about theatre into an evening of theatre.

In *Play-Boy* the company succeed in creating a bristling, engaging evening of performance. The show does not ignore the straightforward pleasures of storytelling and pretending, but neither does it allow for any lapses of concentration, our promise easy rewards. A better definition of vital theatre would be hard to find.

LUKE CLANCY

Riding on the rhythm

of *Mainstream*, at the MacRobert Art Centre, feels back the layers of personal artifice even more than it leaves open late-night scenes and morning-after awkwardness we can all recognise. Simple enough exercise, but suspect culture like to make it difficult for themselves, in the dizzying permutations at result from having four aors play two characters less no avenue of intimacy unexplored.

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**THEATRE ROYAL** DTT 159 0902 0912 *WHEN PIG*

**■ PARIS GALLERIES**  
The genius of Rothko

# ARTS

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1993

**■ LONDON GALLERIES**  
Russian curiosities

# Long, dazed journey into night

**VISUAL ART:**

**Richard Cork**  
on important  
Paris shows  
devoted to the  
genius of Rothko  
and Hockney

Only a year before he committed suicide in 1970, Mark Rothko made the Tate Gallery an exceptionally handsome gift of nine major paintings. Apart from reflecting his love of Turner's most sublime work, the donation conveyed Rothko's gratitude to a country where his art had already enjoyed warm admiration. Now, however, the great Rothko retrospective already shown in Washington and New York has bypassed London and ends its tour in Paris. So British devotees of Rothko's luminous, transcendent vision must make a pilgrimage to the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, where long queues brave the winter winds to pay homage to a master of Modernism.

To judge by the awed faces at the exhibition, visitors find Rothko well worth the wait. I would go further. This is an exceptionally moving show, installed with lucid simplicity and select enough to avoid the risk of lapsing into monotony. Rothko's output was immense, and a large survey might easily make him look repetitive. Here, however, the organisers stop well short of overkill. And they are not afraid of revealing how long he took to discover his identity as an artist.

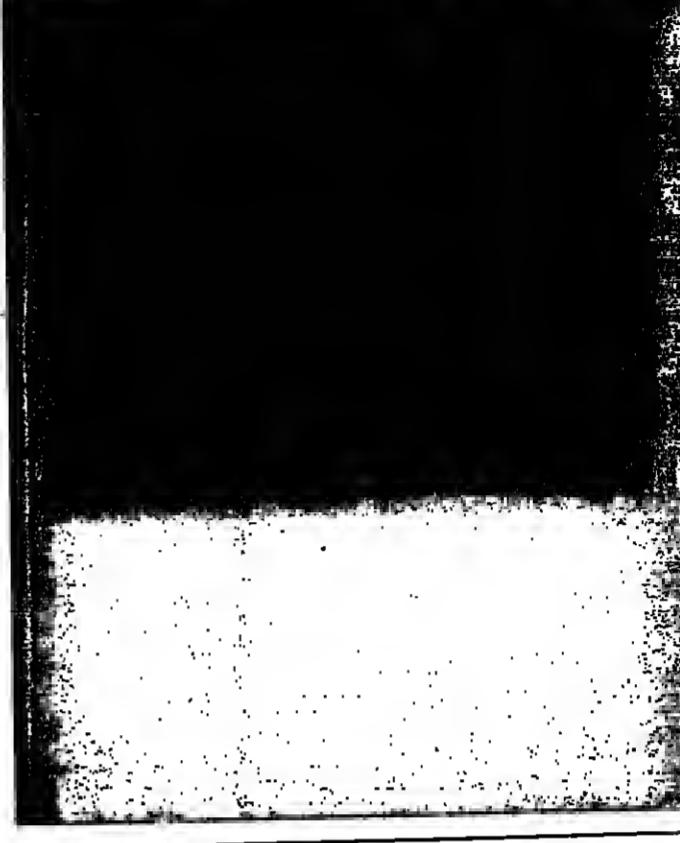
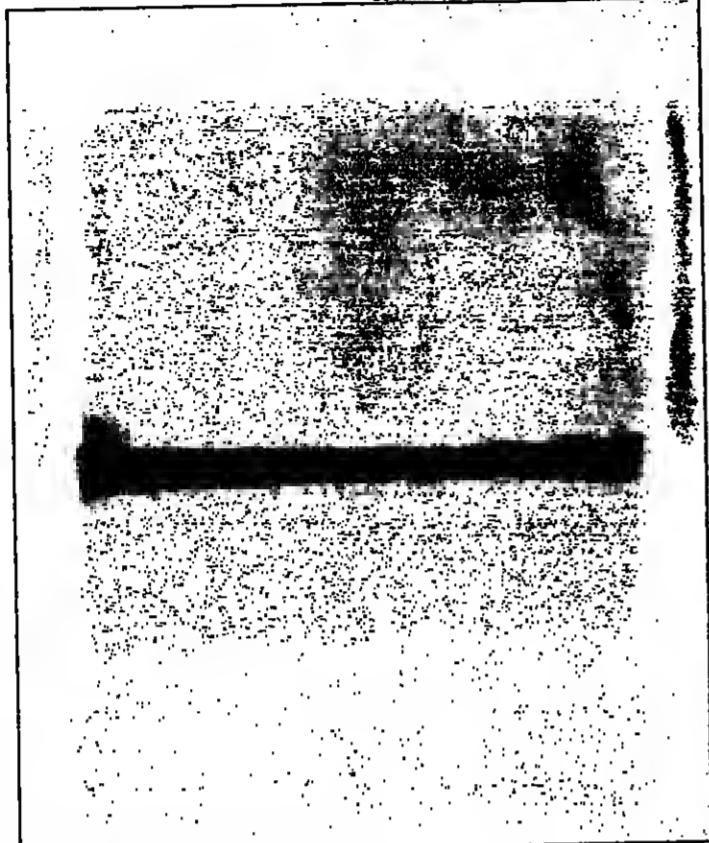
Emigrating from his native Russia at the age of nine, the young Marcus Rothkowitz had good reason to feel insecure. His father died in 1914, only two years after the family settled in Portland, Oregon. To help to overcome the ensuing hardship, Rothko was obliged to sell newspapers in the street. It was a miracle that he did well enough at school to win a bursary to Yale University, but no surprise that he left before obtaining a degree. Already prey to the highly strung temperament that plagued him throughout life, he studied painting in New York instead.

Rothko struggled for the next two decades to find his voice. A forlorn series of Manhattan subway paintings, each stressing urban alienation, indicate just how isolated he must have felt. Only with hindsight can we see how the stark, planar organisation of these subterranean images prophesies the structure he would favour in his mature work.

After 1940, when he began to exhibit under the name of Rothko, a new feeling of solidarity emerged in the New York avant-garde. He met Cly福德 Still and Jackson Pollock, who shared his desire for extreme renewal. But the paintings he produced in the war years, ridged with mythological references and tides as mysterious as *The Omen of the Eagle*, seem fussy and starved of the epic, sensuous vision he would discover later.

The true breakthrough occurred only around 1948, when Rothko realised that he should discard all his unwieldy and obscure references to the past. Concentrating now on a few elements only, and unafraid to purge his canvases of all irrelevant details, he gradually discovered how to let bands, lozenges and strips of smouldering colour float on the picture surface. His brushwork became blurred, allowing his pigment to grow as vaporous as a cloud. And each component, whether as thin as a line or as looming as a land-mass, is allowed space to assert its own character.

From 1950 until his tragic death,



Rothko's art is essentially abstract. But we cannot help seeing in these great veils of orange, red, black, yellow or maroon a host of possible references to the visible world. The division between one element and its neighbour often resembles a horizon. We feel alone in the immensity of a bare landscape, gazing towards a sky suffused with the last, brilliant flare of waning light. Windows are evoked as well, capacious enough to encompass the vastness of an elemental view beyond.

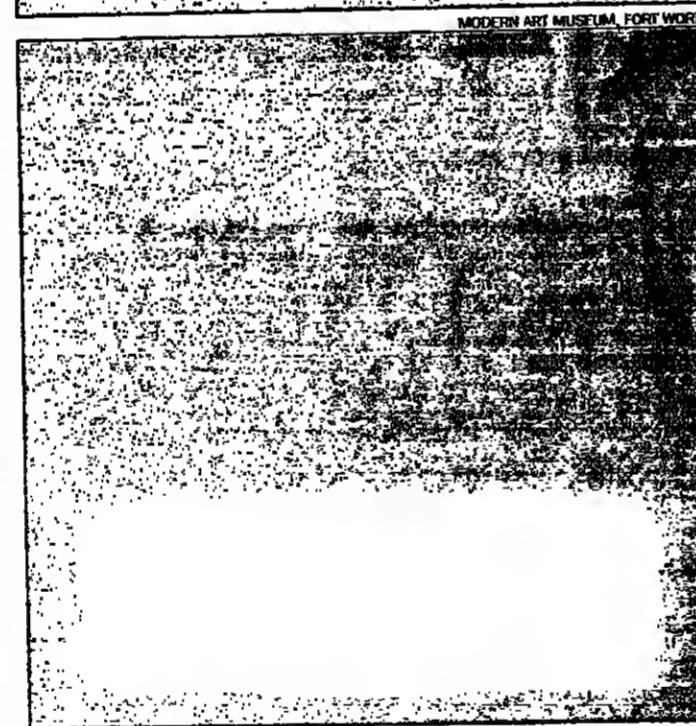
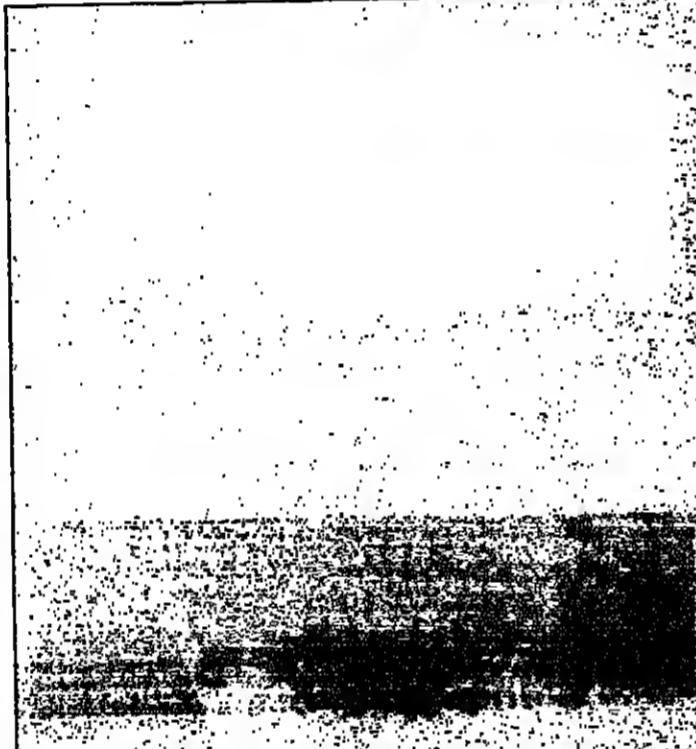
No figures can be detected in Rothko's mature work, but it never feels impersonal. Even at their largest and most enveloping, his paintings seem surprisingly intimate. They relate very directly to our own experience of the world, although Rothko constantly succeeds in conveying a sense of cosmic, unfathomable strangeness.

The depression that finally overwhelmed him is disclosed with terrifying candour in the last room. Restricted now to a dour combination of black and muddy grey or brown, Rothko confronts utter negation. Darkness has descended, seemingly for ever. He could find no pathway out of the gloom, and the final paintings are pitifully demoralised.

Their pessimism is all the more shocking when compared with the boundless aspiration of the paintings he produced at his zenith.

After this, it is a relief to find David Hockney's Space/Landscape at the Pompidou Centre. Displayed in temporary rooms, while most of the building is closed for extensive renovation, the survey commences with a witty 1962 painting. Here a demonic young Hockney and his friends refuse to look out of the car window as they race crazily through Switzerland en route to Florence. Since then, though, he has stayed at his surroundings more and more intently.

Some of his finest 1967 California poolscapes are here, including *A Bigger Splash*, and by 1970 he depicts two friends gazing as if spellbound towards converging avenues of trees in a Vichy park. Two years later, Hockney painted the most seductive canvas on show here: a luminous, melting view of Mount Fuji, its liquid forms contrasted with the precision of a single flower isolated in a foreground vase. His subsequent fascination with fractured, distorting perspectives inspired by Cubism has led him to far more restless images. *Pearblossom Highway*, shimmering in the Californian desert, is



made from hundreds of colour photographs painstakingly assembled into a coherent view. The result is like a shattered mosaic, reconstructed piece by piece.

And it paves the way for an even more epic, multipart photographic collage of the Grand Canyon. Originally taken in 1932, these images now form the basis of two colossal

## AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

### In the dingy deeps of the dirty old city

David Hepher is a landscape painter. Every summer he takes off to southern France, to romantic sunlit regions around Toulouse. For the rest of the year, as head of painting at the Slade School of Art, he works in London. The cityscape becomes his subject — but not the pomp or splendour of the tourist brochure. Hepher captures the type of urban landscape you might glimpse as you crawl through the bowels of a capital on a train. His subject is the bland reality of the high-rise housing estate, the 1960s dream gone wrong.

Against layered concrete and timber shuttering, tall rectangles cut stark geometries intended to echo the abstractions of Mondrian and De Stijl. As a teacher, Hepher flashes his art-historical credentials. Between a tower and a graffiti-scarred fence, Piero della Francesca's view of Arezzo is quoted. A glimpse of El Greco's moonlit Toledo crouches in a corner. But the soulless atmosphere of these works belongs to an altogether more contemporary age. Stains seep, graffiti sprawls, paint overflows like a blocked drain.

*Flowers East* 199-305 Richmond Road, E8 (0181-985 3333) until Monday

■ AFTER a suicidal period of depression and a long, slow haul to stability, is Cork Street back afloat at last, bobbing on the currents of contemporary art? The Helly Nahmad Gallery, which opened last year, is shortly to display the work of some of the most established names on the scene. And last week Robert Sanderson opened its doors onto a stylish new space at Number Five.

The art of the Russian painter and theatre designer Yuri Kuper forms the mainstay of Sanderson's first show. The viewer steps into a *cabinet de curiosités*, into

poetic realm collage from scrounged bric-a-brac. Antique copperplate writing, allowing newspaper, old tins and records and daguerreotype plate become part of the surfaces on which muted, textured tones of pain are layered and left to settle, like dust of old memories. There a sense that nothing has been stirred for years, that flowers might have been found pressed between the leaves of a Victorian Bible, that the scene of the stage has not been trodden for some 0 years. Kuper recreates the stillness of some Miss Hirschman's world.

This clashes strongly with the show in a downstairs gallery dedicated to up-to-the-minute art. Here Micha Klein's gispy tableau of camp fairies jostles for attention with a typically saintry Jack Yeats, or the squat squares of Bridget Riley. And maze-like lithographs by Louise Bourgeois appear to have been chosen more for the name of the artist than the merit of the work, this does little to detract from an otherwise fresh, heterogeneous show.

Robert Sanderson, 5 Cork Street, W1 (0171-439 1001) until April 9

■ Arabella Caccia is vivacious and expressive. She managed to spill a cup of coffee over Nicola Rae on the day that they first met. Nicola maintained a characteristic serenity. But if the personalities of these two artists are different, their works are both rooted in the earth. Sifting and funnelling ground-down soil into Perspex boxes, Rae creates wonderfully tranquil pieces which surprise and soothe. Caccia is more dramatic. The hot landscapes of South Africa are the starting point for swirling meditations on spirituality and myth.

New Burlington Street Gallery, W1 (0171-287 2466) until Saturday

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSON



Memory lane: Russian painter Yuri Kuper's *Apples on a Plate*

Well worth a pilgrimage to Paris: works by Mark Rothko in all his moods, both vibrant and gloomy, dating from 1949 to 1958

ROYAL COMMAND: "The Crown Prince and Princess came to the Tokyo Globe and I sat in a box with them."

Any mentors besides Thelma Holt? Richard Eyre was her predecessor at Oxford. "I went to the National Theatre's studio with my Peer Gynt company. We did an acting workshop with Fiona Shaw, voice sessions and singing."

Future plans: "I'm hoping to direct a show in a regional theatre studio, but I can't talk about it yet. Then, sometime, I may have a go at starting my own company."

HEATHER NEILL



Mark Rosenblatt: spotted by Thelma Holt while at Oxford

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### GREAT BRITISH HOPES

#### Rising stars in the arts firmament

##### MARK ROSENBLATT

Age: 21

Profession: Director

Education: St Paul's and Oxford. "So predictable."

Beginnings: Directing Dr Faustus at school at 16 with a £600 budget. "That's the joy of going to a rich institution."

Oxford eccentricism: He mounted productions of *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *Ghetto*, *Peer Gynt*, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Saved*. Useful experience: "I acted at school and university, which was good grounding for a director."

Big break: He is assisting John Crowley, the director of *Macbeth*, starring Rufus

Sewell and Sally Dexter, arriving at the Queen's Theatre tonight.

Straight to the top, then? He was spotted by Thelma Holt, producer of *Macbeth*, while at Oxford. Holt was Cameron Mackintosh, Professor of Contemporary Theatre there in his final year. She also saw his touring production of *The Taming of the Shrew* in Japan.

Eastern promise: "We went to Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo, where we performed at the Globe — it's carpeted, a combination of authenticity and middle-class comfort. All the venues were very different, and I had to relearn and let the actors grow into it. I learnt to be philosophical — I didn't much like the show myself."

Royal command: "The Crown Prince and Princess came to the Tokyo Globe and I sat in a box with them."

Any mentors besides Thelma Holt? Richard Eyre was her predecessor at Oxford. "I went to the National Theatre's studio with my Peer Gynt company. We did an acting workshop with Fiona Shaw, voice sessions and singing."

What does "assisting" on *Macbeth* entail? "I rehearse the understudies and do little bits when the director asks

me. It's a brilliant learning experience."

Training? "There's a shameful lack of formal training for directors in this country. The best way to learn is through practical experience and I've been lucky."

Future plans: "I'm hoping to direct a show in a regional theatre studio, but I can't talk about it yet. Then, sometime, I may have a go at starting my own company."

HEATHER NEILL

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*Evening Standard*

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*Telegraph*

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ECONOMY

## SOUTH KOREA

Focus

Michael Knipe presents a four-page report on the economy, finance and investment taking place in South Korea

# Spirit of revival ready to greet Queen's visit

**S**outh Korea marks the first anniversary of President Kim Dae Jung's term of office tomorrow with preparations under way in Seoul, the capital, for an eagerly awaited state visit by the Queen in April.

There are hopes that this royal occasion will set the seal on the country's remarkably speedy turnaround from the financial crisis it suffered when it was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$58.35 billion (£38.3 billion) loan. That was in December 1997, after four decades of astonishing growth averaging 8 per cent a year.

Today the shock of the economic collapse is still apparent. Unemployment rates are expected to rise still further. But the belief is strong that the worst may be over.

There have been a series of indicators in the past few weeks that the programme of radical reforms introduced during the past year by the Kim Dae Jung administration are having the desired effect.

"Today our usable foreign exchange reserves exceed \$50 billion," said Mr Lee Kyu Sung, the Minister of Finance and Economy. "In 1997 they had sunk to \$4 billion so we have achieved a very dramatic increase."

Mr Lee highlighted other firm signs of revival: the exchange rate against the dollar, which a year ago spiralled to 1,950 won, has stabilised at around 1,170 won. Foreign



Foreign Minister Hong

exchange reserves, which had dwindled to \$3.8 billion, are now at a record high of \$50 billion. Interest rates have dropped dramatically from almost 30 per cent to about 8 per cent and inflows of foreign direct investment last year totalled \$8.9 billion — a record.

In December, Seoul began repaying its IMF loan with an amount close to \$4 billion, the clearest indication yet, in the eyes of Hubert Neiss, the IMF's director for the Asia and Pacific department, that for South Korea the balance of payments crisis is over. It is premature to open the champagne," said Hong Soon Young, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with a wry smile. "The economy is not completely out of

the turmoil. It is in the midst of restructuring. And restructuring, half finished, can be an invitation to another round of economic crisis.

"So this is no time for complacency or too much optimism. The rules of a free market economy are not firmly in place in the minds and behaviour of the economic players. I believe it will take at least another one or two years before we have the vitality and momentum for economic growth."

Nevertheless, in spite of these words of caution, there is no doubt that the Kim Dae Jung administration believes it is on the right path.

South Koreans are a modest people by nature, an ancient society overshadowed internationally by their richer Japanese neighbours and their more numerous Chinese ones.

There are few obvious signs of the economic depression in Seoul, largely destroyed during the war with the North in the 1950s and now a modern capital of unlovely 1960s and 1970s monumental architecture, cut through by ten and twelve-lane motorways, and, relatively only by a few elegant palaces from past eras. Pedestrians have been all but banished to underground shopping malls and cross-street passageways.

However, the city has a thrusting dynamism. Platoons of elegantly uniformed receptionists are on hand in all official buildings, with numerous counter assistants, simi-



There are few signs of economic depression in Seoul: in some city stores staff wear clothes that are more chic than in Knightsbridge

larily aimed in modern department stores more chic, if anything, than their Knightsbridge and Fifth Avenue counterparts.

Bustling side-street shopping centres and street markets are open late and a modern and highly efficient underground and railway system is manned by staff as smartly dressed as military generals.

The Queen's visit will be her first to the Korean peninsula. It was pencilled in on her prospective agenda, well before the financial crisis occurred. At that time, Korea's star was burning bright. It had the eleventh-largest economy in the world — ahead of Russia, Australia and India — and was the world's twelfth-largest trading nation. With a population of 46 million it had a

per capita income of \$10,000 and, in economic terms, it was the biggest country that the Queen had not visited.

As a result of the financial crisis, it has probably slipped down the economic league table somewhat over the past 15 months but what South Korea has lost in terms of its economic standing it has made up for in its democratic progress.

When the presidency passed to Kim Dae Jung, it was the first time that power had been transferred peacefully and democratically in Korea for 50 years.

So far as the royal visit to go ahead in April is, if anything, stronger: it will show that Britain is not just a fair-weather friend and will demonstrate support for the

democratic changes that have occurred.

Relations between the two countries have been traditionally warm and they have been further enhanced by the fact that, during his days as a political dissident, President Kim Dae Jung spent a year in Cambridge in 1993, based at the graduate college, Clare Hall. While at Cambridge he was a popular figure, befriended by his neighbour Professor Stephen Hawking — and he has since stated publicly that this period in his life was highly instrumental in what was, in effect, part of his preparation for high office.

Koreans will see the Queen's visit as a tribute to their democratic and economic reforms. This is considered particularly fitting as the struc-

tural reforms and free market ideology of the Thatcher years are held in high regard in Seoul.

"We are using Britain as a role model in seeing what government agencies can be delegated to the private sector," said Dr Kim Tae Dong, Senior Secretary to the President for Policy and Planning Affairs. "We hope the British experience can be repeated in Korea. We firmly believe that the systematic and long-sustained reform can produce sustained growth as it did in Britain."

For Koreans, said Mr Hong, the Queen represents British values: "So this is how we appreciate Her Majesty and, particularly as this is her first visit, she will be assured of a hugely enthusiastic welcome."

## Chaebols must reform

**T**he top five chaebols, the family-oriented conglomerates that dominate the South Korean economy, are now the prime targets of the Seoul Government as it presses ahead with the latest stage of its programme to reform the country's fortunes: corporate restructuring.

The five — Hyundai, Samsung, Daewoo, LG Group (formerly Lucky Goldstar) and the SK Group (formerly Sunkyong) — together with about 50 smaller chaebols, were for several decades the primary engines of growth for the South Korean economy. However, their numerous and diverse subsidiaries, which borrowed and spent recklessly — amid frequent accusations of corruption — are widely blamed for bringing the country to its knees economically.

Under pressure from President Kim Dae Jung's administration, the top five chaebols agreed in December to undertake a series of reforms including putting up for sale their marginal and unprofitable units and to focus their activities more directly on their core sectors.

But the battle of wills between the Government reformers and the chaebol tycoons is not over.

"Several of the top figures own only 5 or 6 per cent of their conglomerate's shares but act as if they own 100 per cent, and are resisting the reforms the Government is introducing," says Dr Yoo Jong Keun, the Governor of the North Cholla Province and a senior economic adviser to President Kim Dae Jung. "That can no longer be tolerated. For some the overriding concern is to maintain control of their businesses but some will be in danger of losing it."

Dr Yoo, a former economics professor at Rutgers University, is an influential figure in the President's team of reformers and describes himself as "public enemy No 1, as far as the chaebols are concerned".

The top five have committed themselves to shedding 91 of their subsidiaries through mergers, liquidations and sell-offs to foreign business interests. They have also undertaken to repay external debts owed by other subsidiaries to improve their financial standing.

"Last year we devised a very specific plan to restructure the top five chaebols," says Lee Ki Song, the Minister of Finance and Economy.

"This year we are making sure the plan will be implemented on schedule. We are determined to ensure

that they concentrate on their core areas of competence, that they do not digress from this and that they achieve a debt ratio of 200 per cent by the end of the year. At present the top chaebols have an average of 27 subsidiaries each. And each one

Reforms are helping to revive the country's fortunes



ernment ministries are under management review by outside teams of consultants. No other country has attempted this kind of reform and to focus their activities more directly on their core sectors. But the battle of wills between the Government reformers and the chaebol tycoons is not over.

A campaign to eliminate excessive regulations has so far scrapped about half of nearly 12,000 existing rules.

According to Kang Bong Kyun, Senior Secretary to the President for Economic Affairs, the economic restructuring programme should be completed this year and the economy should return to normal growth next year. But, he says, it will be another three years before the country regains the \$10,000 per capita income levels it had before the onset of the financial crisis.

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an expression of disappointment at the sale of the Korea First Bank to the American conglomerate and an indication of the competitive pressures among the international community to acquire a toehold in South Korea Incorporated.

Foreign direct investment into the country totalled \$9.85 billion last year, a record high and a 27 per cent increase on 1997. The Government's target for this year is \$15 billion.

Of this UK investment amounted to \$60 million, a slight increase over the previous year. And if British Telecom's investment in Korea's LG Telecom — which was made through the BT affiliate in the Netherlands — is added on to the total of investment amount from the UK surged to \$457 million.

This month has seen two major

British investments. PowerGen UK is investing \$20 million in LG Energy, a subsidiary of the LG Group, to build a 528 megawatt gas-fired combined-cycle gas turbine plant at Asan Bay in South Chungchong Province. It will be the first power plant constructed in Korea by a private company. And British Aerospace has won a £46 million contract from the South Korean navy to develop and produce the combat-management system for three 5,000-tonne South Korean destroyers. Meanwhile, Tesco is setting up a joint venture firm with the marketing division of Samsung.

"In the past Korea did not pay attention to the need for foreign investment," said Park Tae Young,

the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy. In 1996 it was only 2.4 per cent of GDP compared with more than 20 per cent in the UK.

But since the extent of the financial crisis became apparent the public had come to realise that it was an imperative element of economic recovery.

Antracting foreign investment is

now a top priority and the Govern-

ment has shifted the direction of

policy towards promoting rather

than regulating it. The types of

business eligible for tax reduction

or exemption has been expanded from 265 to 533 and foreign investment zones have been established in which incentives are offered to foreign investors who create new businesses.

At present foreign investors receive benefits only when their individual investment exceeds \$100 million.

But in an effort to entice more small-scale foreign investors, the Government is considering providing tax incentives to groups of small companies engaged in similar lines of work if their aggregate investment amounts to \$100 million.

"Now we are allowing even hostile mergers and acquisitions of Korean companies by foreign com-

panies and foreigners can also own real estate here," Mr Park says.

The Government is also keen to

promote venture capital enterprises.

"I believe that if we can combine

British advanced technology and capital with Korean manufacturing power then companies here will be able to enhance their competitiveness considerably, so I expect more investment from Britain," Mr Park adds.

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# Friends or foes?

**Michael Knipe**  
reports on  
a pale glint  
of sunshine

If you use a pair of binoculars to peer through the winter mist across the demilitarised zone between South and North Korea, you can just make out the shape of a North Korean border guard in a watchtower, staring back.

This is the world's most fortified border, dividing the Stalinist North from the democratised South, is one of the last remnants of the Cold War.

A South Korean soldier points out the buildings of Khungdong which, he says, is a fake North Korean village. There are no fires and no laundry hung out to dry.

When the wind is blowing in the right direction the North Koreans occasionally dispatch balloons carrying leaflets extolling the virtues of their President, Kim Jong Il. But the confrontation along the demilitarised zone (DMZ), just 27 miles north of Seoul is, at present, mostly uneventful.

The most recent North Korean defector to cross over made his move five months ago and there has been no shooting across the border for at least a year.

North Korean propaganda, which used to blast across the DMZ through huge speakers for 18 hours a day, now spouts forth for no more than five hours a day. "That's because the North is so short of electricity," says Corporal Park Min Woo.

The shortage of electricity, like the rash of attempted escapes across North Korea's northern border into China, are signs of the desperate economic plight of the Pyongyang regime and are of great concern to President Kim Dae Jung's Government in Seoul.

On taking office, the South Korean President embarked on a "sunshine policy" aimed at achieving peace on the Korean peninsula through reconciliation and co-operation with the Pyongyang Government. Opposition critics fear that in the face of the North's development of long-range missiles

Warriors and peacemakers: soldiers at the border and Chung Ju Yung with his cattle

and a suspected nuclear facility, this approach may prove to be nothing better than a policy of appeasement.

The Government in Seoul rejects this. Hong Soon Young, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, says: "Our policy is that the North Korean regime must be warned sternly of the penalties they face over such provocations, but that these should be seen in the context of inter-Korean relations and no circumstances should there be overreaction. There should be no black or white reaction to acts of provocation. This is what diplomacy is all about."

Instead Seoul is trying to promote what it describes as an atmosphere which will help Pyongyang to start reform of its own volition. It is actively pushing for South-North co-operation and exchanges. There are indications of positive change of a limited but distinct nature, says Mr Hong. The regime is lessening its state of isolation and showing signs of taking account of market forces.

Kim Hyung Kee, the head of unification policy at the Ministry of Unification, points to the

Government's policy of allowing private-sector exchanges across the border. The most spectacular of these was orchestrated and then led by Chung Ju Yung, 83, the founder and honorary chairman of Hyundai, the largest of Korea's conglomerates.

Last June he became the first South Korean civilian to enter North Korea across the DMZ at Panmunjom. Accompanied by TV cameras, he took with him 500 head of cattle which, it was hoped, would help to improve North stock. A gift to the people of his native Tongchon district, the animals were transported on 50 trucks specially built by Hyundai for the trip and also donated to the North. On his return, Mr Chung sent a further 500 head of cattle and donated 50,000 tons of grain, spending a total of \$8.5 million on the venture.

In November, Mr Chung began offering South Korean cruise trips through the East Sea to view Mount Kumgang (Diamond Mountain), a North Korean peak of great symbolic significance to Koreans. The passengers were the first South Korean tourists to

visit the North since the peninsula was divided half a century ago.

One of the passengers reported that the sightseeing area they visited was extremely limited and that they were not allowed to deviate from the designated course. They had no opportunity to make contact with North Koreans. The few people they saw beyond the barbed wire were expressionless and indifferent to them "as if we weren't there".

In spite of these drawbacks, Mr Chung has more ambitious plans. The Hyundai Group has obtained exclusive rights from the Pyongyang regime to develop tourist facilities on and around Mount Kumgang. It plans to invest \$397 million by the end of next year to build ski resorts, golf courses, condominiums and hotels. Hyundai has already paid \$2.4 million to the North from the Mount Kumgang entrance fees. Hyundai is also drawing up a masterplan for the development of an industrial complex covering with a total area of 66 million square metres on the west coast of North Korea.

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Jennifer Veale reports from Seoul on an imminent political dogfight, while Ruth Taplin examines the benefits of UK-Korean business deals

**Politics**

**K**im Dae Jung, the South Korean President, starts his second year in office this week, a turning point which looks certain to mark the end of his honeymoon with some old-fashioned political brawlers.

During an impressive debut year, the former dissident has won respect worldwide for his determination to implement a political agenda aimed at opening up a shuttered economy in the face of powerful vested interests. But 1999 will prove the acid test of his capacity to make the really tough decisions.

President Kim faces mounting political challenges. After lying low for most of last year while the Government went about fixing the economy, the Opposition is now exploiting the exasperation of a recession-hit public to stir protest against painful reforms to the powerful conglomerates (known as *chaebols*) with which it has close ties. In addition, the President's unlikely coalition with the man who headed Korea's spy agency during his dissident days is looking shaky over delays to landmark reforms to the political system.

But the challenges issued by the opposition and the *chaebols* are becoming President Kim's biggest headaches. They are spoiling for a brawl over the key element of his economic reforms — business swaps and mergers known as "big deals" which have been designed to trim back the sprawling conglomerates.

A year of political blood-letting beckons. The opposition Grand National Party accuses President Kim's National Congress for New Politics of discriminating against *chaebols* from the GNP's southeastern strongholds. It also challenges strong-arm tactics that it says the Government is using to push the "big deals" through.

"The honeymoon is over," says Jon Gryn Mo, a political science professor at Yonsei University in Seoul. "Basically, for the first six months, President Kim could do whatever he wanted. Now everyone is showing signs of resistance."

The GNP lost by a whisker at the last election, ending a 50-year monopoly of political power by conservative parties. But it has regrouped and is mounting a fresh challenge to President Kim's coalition Government. Lee Hoi Chang, the GNP leader, has accused President Kim of acting like a dictator and of fanning chronic regional antipathies by discriminating against areas outside his political stronghold in the southwest provinces.



Steering the country out of troubled times: Kim Dae Jung, the South Korean President, is optimistic about his country's future

## Honeymoon over for champion of reform

Driving the GNP's resurgence is its fear that it may be reduced to a rump if the NCNP succeeds in eroding its power-base in the southwest provinces, as it must do to win re-election in its own right. Already the NCNP has secured a House majority by poaching two dozen of the opposition's law-makers.

Currently, the proxy war being fought is over the Government's plan to trim back the operations of the *chaebols*, whose loan binges contributed to the economic crisis. These "big deals" will result in sweeping lay-offs.

The GNP claims that most job losses will hit its power-base of South Kyongsang Province, where most of the top *chaebols* are based. It has drawn strength from a disgruntled public fearful for their jobs, and is calling on the Govern-

ment to stop force-feeding reforms down the throats of the *chaebols*.

The GNP's determination to make this year a difficult one for President Kim was exemplified at a protest rally it staged late last month against a planned "big deal" between Samsung and Daewoo. The rally served as a wake-up call for the Government.

"The Government was stunned by the turnout and the people's mood," Professor Jon Gryn Mo says. But it has since picked up the scent of discontent and recently began peacemaking moves with the GNP, the fruits of which have not yet ripened.

While fighting a pumped-up opposition, the NCNP also has prob-

### A year of political brawling beckons as resistance grows

lems closer to home. Its alliance with the United Liberal Democrats, led by the deeply conservative former spy agency boss Kim Jong Pil, is under strain because of delays in implementing political reforms.

President Kim, a champion of democracy, pledged during his campaign to dilute the virtually unchallenged power of the President by vesting more power in the Prime Minister, who would be responsible to parliament.

Kim Jong Pil, the current Prime Minister, has recently been outspo-

ken about his desire to see his coalition partner make good on the promise. While the NCNP insists that it will act on its pledge, it has been put on the back-burner as the Government tackles the more weighty matter of economic recovery.

"Kim Jong Pil isn't expected to sit idly by if the President ditches that promise," says Professor Lee Jong Hoon, a political scientist.

In an ironic twist, the Opposition's campaign to wreck the NCNP's bid to establish political hegemony may be in Kim Jong Pil's best interests.

Observers say that parliamentary reforms to appease the coalition partner will be pushed down the NCNP priority list if it believes it can win an election without the help of the ULD.

## Adventures in joint ventures

**INVESTMENT IN UK**

**K**orean outward investment to the UK has slowed. With the economic turmoil forcing the *chaebols* to restructure, the resultant selling and exchanging of assets has become a preoccupation for them.

Samsung, for example, has sold its automotive sector to Daewoo and the latter has sold its electronics division to Samsung. Meanwhile, Samsung is consolidating its electronics division in the UK and is moving its headquarters from Frankfurt to London.

Hyundai is in the final stages of buying the semiconductor division of LG, including the new semiconductor plant in Wales. It now remains to be seen what Hyundai will do with the operation planned for Newport in South Wales.

Daewoo continues to be a stable source of employment and investment in the UK, with its automotive division showing signs of substantial success.

The majority of Korean companies go to the US for their capital, but the UK is now seen as more promising, as the nature of venture capital is becoming more flexible. Successes in such partnerships in the long term can only benefit inward investment into the UK as joint ventures flourish, providing capital returns to British investors and, in the future, new factories and employment.

the high level of education of the Korean workforce. The majority of engineers, for example, hold PhDs and most have been educated in the United States. Some Koreans study in the UK, and universities in cities such as Newcastle are attempting to attract greater numbers.

Korean venture companies produce many innovative products but require greater capital investment to commercialise their internationally competitive technologies and products. Some are now linking themselves to the *chaebols*, which have the global sales markets and the foreign capital required. However, there is a big drive under way to attract foreign investors to the UK.

Last November KOTRA, the Korean trade organisation, brought to the UK representatives of a wide range of venture companies, in areas ranging from electronics to textiles, some of whom were successful in finding joint-venture partners in Britain.

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Daewoo's automotive operation in the UK is proving a success

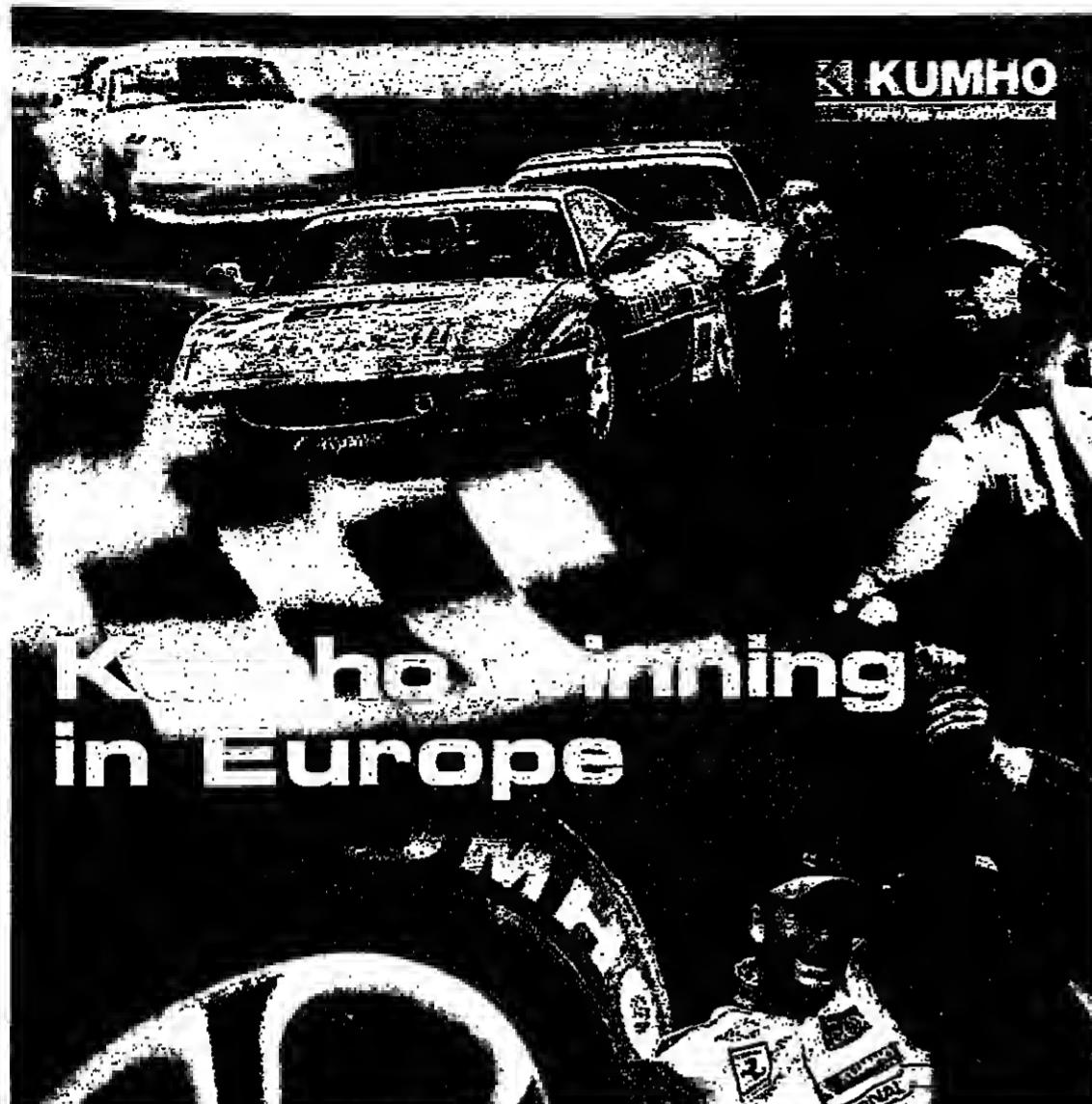
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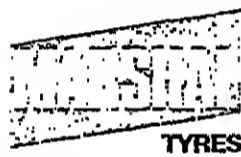


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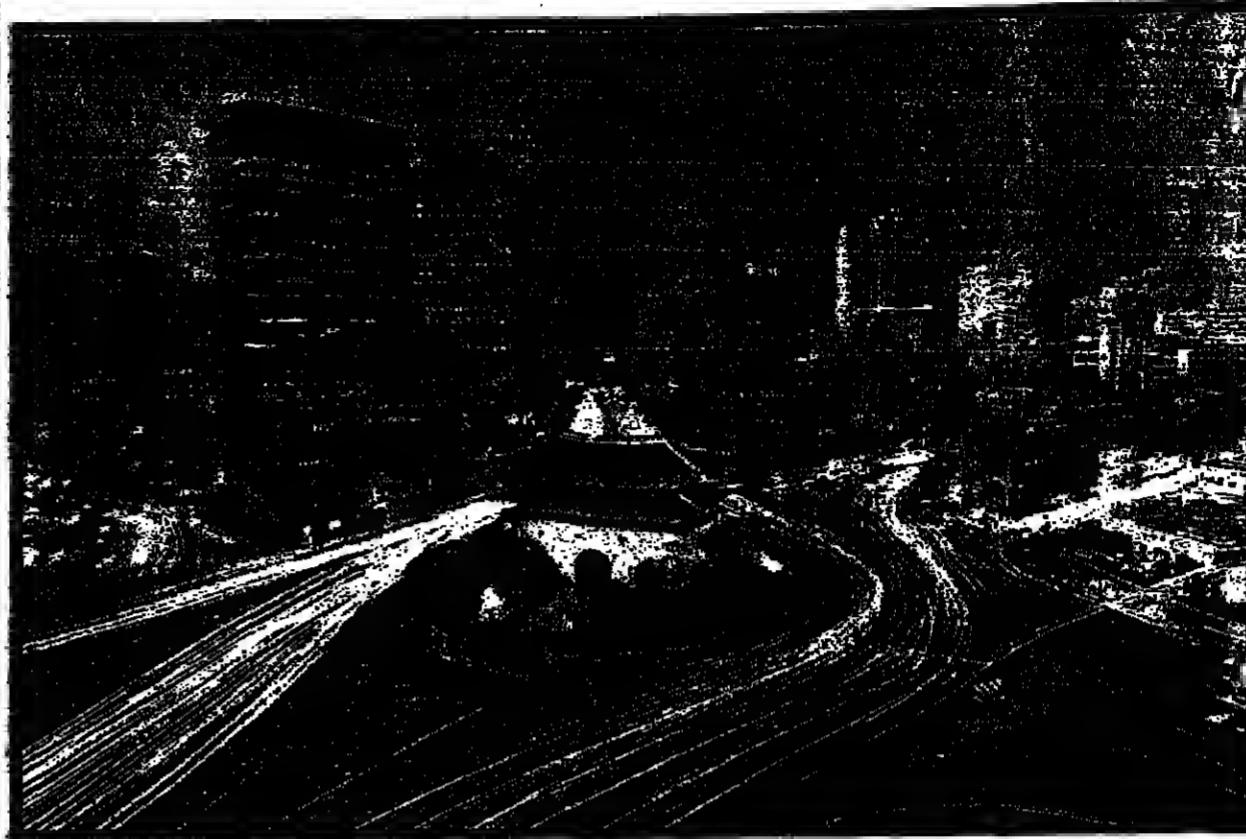


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## Get smart and get out of that jam



Korean traffic at night: road improvements and intelligent transport systems are helping to remove congestion

**T**raffic is heavy in Seoul and other big Korean cities, largely because of an excess of cars and excessive road-building. But a number of bold initiatives are being undertaken to deal with traffic congestion.

This is leading to greater co-operation between the UK and South Korea in the field of intelligent transport systems (ITS).

A two-week mission to Korea by ITS Focus, a British transport research organisation, supported by the DTI, was impressed by the success of one Korean initiative to deal with traffic congestion. This is based on the use of a high-tech e-commerce-based smartcard.

Pusan, the second largest city in South Korea, loses \$1.3 billion each year because of traffic congestion. To combat the problem, the authorities have introduced the Hanaro (*buy only one*) smartcard system which makes it easier for

people to use public transport.

The card can be used to pay for bus, minibus travel and the underground rail service in Pusan. An electronic purse model is also available which can pay for taxis and goods in shops. The simpler prepaid card is more popular and allows for fare discounts if used regularly. The take-up has been 76 per cent of the 200 million commuters targeted since the Hanaro system was initiated last August.

The British mission also noted that unlike the UK, the Ko-

rea Highway Corporation (KHC) is helping to develop road traffic conditions that will relieve overall traffic congestion, and it has initiated a new era of expressway building.

The intention is that increased road capacity will be built with an integral ITS linked to a network of regional traffic control centres.

Despite the country's economic turmoil these ambitious plans are continuing. The ITS mission believes that UK companies can learn from these plans and members can also

offer supportive services to the Koreans to further the plans.

Co-operation and collaboration between the UK and Korea in the realm of automotive development takes many forms and is invaluable for both sides.

Since Daewoo Motors came to Britain, for example, the AA has been providing purchasers of its vehicles with a three-year free servicing warranty and roadside assistance package. The association also provides a recovery and replacement car service.

So much emphasis has been placed on takeovers and swap deals of major chaebols that the success of other smaller conglomerates which provide necessary components — particularly in the transportation sector — sometimes goes unrecognised.

Kumho Tire, for example, through using the latest high-tech equipment, is constantly improving its tyre quality and reputation for safety.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

SPORT 43

RACING: LOSS OF 1,000 GUINEAS FAVOURITE AND DOUBTS ABOUT BIONIC MAR CLASSIC OUTLOOK

# Bint Allayl put down after injuring leg

By CHRIS MCGRATH

**BINT ALLAYL**, the champion juvenile filly and favourite for the Sagittas 1,000 Guineas, was put down late on Monday night after a frantic battle to save her after she sustained leg injuries during exercise that morning.

Her death not only deprives the forthcoming Flat season of one of its most luminous young talents, but is also a ghastly blow to Mick Channon, whom she had helped reach new heights in his sud-

den second career in sport. Though Channon is not the type to be daunted by his breakthrough achievements last year, even he must feel shocked by so savage a reminder of his new calling's uncertainties.

He was typically lacking in self-pity yesterday. "You can only be positive in a situation like this," he said. "We were lucky to have her and now we have to move on. Tomorrow morning, we'll go out to work and see if we can find another one. It's tough on me, sure, but it's tough on the staff and the



Bint Allayl wins the Lowther Stakes at York last season on her way to being acclaimed Europe's top juvenile filly

owner, too. Sheikh Ahmed has plenty of horses, but he thought an awful lot of her." The trainer added: "Everyone is very disappointed, but it's the business we're in. I'm afraid."

If any of Bionic's ante-post supporters are cynical enough to scent profit from the tragedy, however, they will thoroughly deserve the torments in

store during the coming weeks.

Henry Cecil, her trainer, confesses that Bionic's foot problems menace her participation in the Guineas. His first priority, however, was to express sympathy for the calamity that claimed her long-time rival.

The irony is that Channon had only regained the services

of Bint Allayl against two more obvious threats. She dodged the drain to Dubai with Godolphin, and also underwent surgery on a hock, which denied her what Channon might justly consider a "penalty kick" for the Cheveley Park Stakes. That fell to Wanabe Grand, whom she had beaten with customary flair in the Lowther Stakes at York.

Channon still had much his best season, showing great assurance in handling his first yearlings from Sheikh Ahmed al-Maktoum, for whom he also won the Gimcrack Stakes with Joss Algarhoud. Though that colt did go to Dubai, Channon's allocation has been doubled to 12.

Anthony Stroud, the

Sheikh's racing manager,

said: "While doing a routine canter Bint Allayl suffered a complete spiral fracture of her left forehumerus. She was given emergency first aid on site and transported to Donnington Grove Veterinary Surgery. Here five experts strove in vain to rescue the filly. Stroud added: "Sheikh Ahmed would like to thank them and their staff for their tireless efforts. Mick Channon, who trained her so well, Candy Morris, who rode her, and her dedicated lass Alwena Jones."

The Green Desert filly had

shared 5-1 Guineas favouritism with Bionic in the Tote's betting.

Bionic now has that dubious honour to herself, at 4-1, followed on 9-1 by Molava and Elizaaz Ladbrokes, better attuned to Ceci's problems, prefers Molava as favourite at 7-1, with Bionic as big as 9-1.

Even that price will make no appeal to anyone reading Ceci's frank update. "She has problems with her feet and it's a question of whether we can train her with them," he said.

"It will put itself right eventually, it's a matter of the time we have got. She has been cantering, but not just lately, has had a corn that had to be cut out. That's not her major problem. She is trotting now and I hope she'll be cantering by the end of the week."

Bionic was restricted to just

one appearance at two, impressing in a Goodwood maiden,

so she will be sorely lacking experience even if Ceci

can get her to the classic.

# McCoy escapes lightly from heavy Ludlow fall

By CHRIS MCGRATH

TONY McCLOY often appears as indestructible as he can be invincible and the champion jockey was certainly lucky to escape serious injury at Ludlow yesterday.

Leading over the first in the novice handicap chase on Northern Drums, McCoy was thrown to the ground and trampled underfoot by the following field. He lay motionless before being stretchered by ambulance to Hereford Hospital for X-rays.

Happily, his vow leaving the course — "It'll take more than this to keep me out of the Cheltenham Festival" — proved no mere bravado, and he was later discharged with nothing more serious than a badly bruised right leg. How his colleague, Andrew Thornton, must envy his good fortune. He makes a welcome return at Folkestone today, after surgery on a leg infection at the end of the year.

The only inflammation at the annual general meeting of the Betting Office Licensees' Association (BOLA) yesterday was verbal. Even here its chairman, Chris Bell, distanced himself from "fizz and froth" over the forthcoming negotiations between racing and betting industries on the Levy Scheme.

He undertook to keep the "temperature of discussions under control" — and he may shrink from that challenge.

have gone some way towards that objective by extending something of an olive twig to the British Horseracing Board (BHB). He told his fellow bookmakers: "I am sympathetic to the challenges of the level of prize-money in racing, and I do want to see targeted improvements."

Though he could see nothing remotely resembling a crisis in racing, he conceded that there is always room for improvement. He was "not complacent". He added: "Nevertheless, at its core the BHB Financial Plan simply does not reveal a state of crisis, except in one clear category — the owners' desire to have a higher level of financial return. On all other issues, in the main, we agree."

He added: "What we can do is ensure that, above all of those shrill voices, we patiently and comprehensively explain our position to those prepared to make reasoned judgments. There are lots of people in positions of responsibility in bookmaking and racing who fit that category."

Peter Savill, the BHB chairman who has matched the early inflexibility of the betting industry's hawks, expressed confidence that could bring the Levy Board neutrals round to his point of view. "line by line". Certainly he will not shrink from that challenge.

## YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Ludlow

Going: good

2.00 (2m 6f) 1. Sharbeddar (D J Burchell, 14-1), 2. Late Mass Lucy (50-1), 3. True Vision (11-2) (Rusk (ell) 11-10-ta), 4. 1000 Guineas (11-1) (P. Moore (ell) 12-1), 5. Closely Guarded (12-1), 6. Closely Guarded (12-1), 7. Closely Guarded (12-1), 8. Closely Guarded (12-1), 9. Closely Guarded (12-1), 10. Closely Guarded (12-1), 11. Closely Guarded (12-1), 12. Closely Guarded (12-1), 13. Closely Guarded (12-1), 14. Closely Guarded (12-1), 15. Closely Guarded (12-1), 16. Closely Guarded (12-1), 17. Closely Guarded (12-1), 18. Closely Guarded (12-1), 19. Closely Guarded (12-1), 20. Closely Guarded (12-1), 21. Closely Guarded (12-1), 22. Closely Guarded (12-1), 23. Closely Guarded (12-1), 24. Closely Guarded (12-1), 25. Closely Guarded (12-1), 26. Closely Guarded (12-1), 27. Closely Guarded (12-1), 28. Closely Guarded (12-1), 29. Closely Guarded (12-1), 30. Closely Guarded (12-1), 31. Closely Guarded (12-1), 32. Closely Guarded (12-1), 33. Closely Guarded (12-1), 34. 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## FOOTBALL

# Rovers forced to dig deep for fresh reserves

BY STEPHEN WOOD



**IF BLACKBURN** Rovers were indeed "running on empty" last weekend, as Brian Kidd, their manager, suggested, there appears to be little hope for them against Newcastle United tonight. The Ewood Park club's resources have been stretched to the limit and the FA Cup fifth-round replay, for the right to meet Everton in the quarter-finals, comes only four days after their worst defeat of the season.

The law of diminishing returns has gripped Blackburn since Kidd took over as manager. He may have indulged himself in the transfer market, to the tune of £15 million, but his options seem to have been reduced with every match. Jason McAtee and Matt Jansen, automatic selections in the FA Carling Premiership, are ineligible for the Cup, but their absence is the tip of the iceberg.

Chris Sutton and Stephane Henchoz are also missing

tonight, because of injury. Sutton may not need an operation on the foot problem that has troubled him all season, but it is enough to keep him on the sidelines for a further fortnight in what, he accepts, has become his worst season. His enforced inactivity could also affect his chances of earning an England call-up under Kevin Keegan.

Henchoz may need an operation on knee ligaments that he twisted against Sheffield Wednesday last Saturday. Jeff Kenna, the Ireland full back, is doubtful and Flitcroft, McKinlay, Johnson and Gallacher are long-term casualties as the club tries to bounce back from the 4-1 drubbing by Wednesday.

Kidd was typically stoical about his injury-ravaged squad yesterday. "There's no point in bellyaching about it," he said. "The players have been playing while they've been hurting and that's what it's going to be like until the end of the season."

Newcastle's most significant worry concerned Alan Shearer, who was left behind when the squad travelled yesterday because of flu but who Ruud Gullit, the manager, hopes will be able to join his teammates today.

Darren Peacock, the Black-

burn defender who used to be a team-mate of Shearer's at Newcastle, expects to be up against the England captain and knows the key to triumph for a reshuffled defence will be keeping him as quiet as in the first match, which ended 0-0.

Peacock dismisses suggestions

that Shearer has lost any of his threat. "He is still the same player as far as I'm concerned," Peacock said. "He is powerful and strong and, if you give him a chance, he'll

have a go." Peacock added. "I'm concerned about him, but I'm not worried about him."

## Ronaldo struggles to regain fitness

**RONALDO** may miss Inter-

ionale's European Cup

quarter-final, first-leg game

against Manchester United at Old Trafford next Wednesday.

The Brazil striker has been dogged by a knee injury all season and has played only six full matches for the Uefa Cup holders. He has missed Inter's past seven games and only resumed training on Monday after weeks working out in the gym and swimming pool.

"He is showing clear signs of improvement, but it won't be easy for the match against Manchester United," Massimo Moratti, president of Inter, said yesterday in Milan. "He only got back on to a pitch yesterday."

Inter have adopted a policy of using Ronaldo only in significant matches this season. He played the full 90 minutes in his club's Serie A fixtures against Juventus and

Parma, and also in the 3-1 victory over Real Madrid, the European champions, in November.

Some of Ronaldo's Brazilian counterparts at Palmeiras were fuming yesterday after Luiz Felipe Scolari, their coach, claimed they were too fat and gave details of their weight to the media to prove it. Scolari was unrepentant and said that he would continue issuing weight bulletins until players trimmed down.

The pair have scored 32 goals this season, and one of those was Stewart's equaliser in the 2-2 draw against Derby at the McAlpine Stadium 11 days ago. Allison was absent from that match because of the death of his father, but the player returns tonight.

Derby, who are looking to spend a slice of their transfer budget as soon as possible, welcome back Horacio Carbone and Francesco Bajano after a rest. Paul Wanchope, the striker, could be recalled at the expense of Deon Burton, while Jacob Laursen is suspended.

A substandard performance saw Derby lose 2-0 at home to Charlton Athletic in the Premiership last weekend and Jim Smith, the manager, said: "We can't afford a repeat of that against Huddersfield."

"There are certain matters which don't need to be made public," Zinho, team captain and a member of Brazil's 1994 World Cup-winning team, who was registered as being more than 2lb overweight, said. Paulo Nunes, a striker listed as being more than 6lb too heavy, was also upset. "This didn't happen to happen ... If I go out to a restaurant, everybody is going to start commenting."

## SAILING

**CRICKET: BOARD KEEPS ITS OPTIONS OPEN BY REINSTATING CAPTAIN FOR TWO MORE TESTS**

## Lara gets chance to make amends

BY IVO TENNANT

IN APPOINTING Brian Lara captain for the first two Tests of West Indies' forthcoming series against Australia, the Board is giving him a chance to redeem himself after the shambolic tour of South Africa.

The decision, reached after a two-day meeting in Antigua, would also have something to do with a lack of alternative.

It might, too, have been

made for reasons of political expediency. The first Test of the four-match series, starting on March 5, is to be played at Port of Spain, Trinidad. Lara's home ground. The insularity that Sir Frank Worrell strove to overcome in the 1960s is apparent once more in the Caribbean: the appointment of a Jamaican or a Bajan may be deemed to strain on the edge of the challenge.

After a long and difficult search for significant commercial sponsorship backing, Professor Andrew Graves, the chairman of the Spirit of Britain, has decided to go ahead with building one boat while he continues to hunt down the necessary funds to ensure that it is properly campaigned when it reaches Auckland.

It is thought that a group of private backers together with commercial suppliers is enabling one 82ft boat to be built at Port of London, with a budget of around £1.5 million.

Michael Humphreys, a spokesman for the syndicate that is led on the water by Lawrie Smith, said yesterday that Britain will definitely take part. "We have enough money to make a challenge, but we need more to challenge effectively," he said. This will be Britain's first appearance in an America's Cup for 12 years.

Assuming his eyesight has not deteriorated, as has been suggested, Lara's own form should return. As to his

captaincy, he would be well advised to take more heed of the experience of Clive Lloyd, a marginalised figure as his tour manager in South Africa.

He will, no doubt, spend some time on the golf course with the West Indian respecters above all others. Sir Garfield Sobers, who also had cope with leading a side dependent on his own ability.

In England in 1969, when

Owing to the geography of the West Indies, the captaincy has long been a tangled issue.

Each island is a separate territory with its own government and culture. When Lara replaced Courtney Walsh, a Jamaican, as captain for the series against England last year,

there were fears that demon-

strations would take place during the first Test in Kingston.

So the West Indies Board,

under the presidency of Pat Rousseau, is giving Lara every chance of succeeding before his own kin in Trinidad. Fall there and in the cockpit of Sabina Park, the venue for the second Test, and there will be no shortage of vociferous cricket followers ready to tell him that Walsh or Jimmy Adams, another Jamaican, should have had the job instead.

As for inter-island rivalry,

which is afflicting West Indies' unity once more, Lara will

doubtless be reminded by

Sobers of Worrell's attempts

in his day to create "a colony of nations". West Indies' greatest captain wrote in 1966 that

"the team has proved it is a

working federal unit and the

chambers of commerce, politi-

cians and, indeed, all thinking

West Indians see the necessity

for regional co-operation."

West Indies were given a

reminder of the tasks that lay

ahead of them on the field in

the weeks ahead yesterday

when Australia bowed out the

West Indies Board XI for 55 in

Antigua. Adam Dale, the

team bowler, took seven for

55 as Australia established a

first-innings lead of 101.

For the first wicket in 28 overs,

a partnership that ought to

have been the foundation for

a total in the region of 300.

England managed only 260

for six which, as turned out,

was more than enough.

Having started well and pro-

gressed to 106 for three in the

23rd over, Canterbury capitu-

lated to 150 all out. Matt Bul-

beck, the Somerset left-arm

took the vital wicket having

Marcel McKenzie caught in

the deep by Mart Symington

on the deep off-bowling of

Adam Dale.

Bulbeck, coming on as

second change, took two for

nine in an exceptionally accu-

rate spell of seven overs.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

## ATHLETICS

**Ladejo set to take the money and run**

By DAVID POWELL  
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

THERE will be some prize-money, though not much, at stake today when Duaine Ladejo runs his first 400 metres for Great Britain since the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. How Ladejo, the European indoor and outdoor champion who gave up both titles for life as a decathlete, wishes it was more.

Five years ago, Ladejo denied Roger Black a third successive European outdoor gold medal and, 18 months later, won a second successive continental indoor title. No longer, though, does he enjoy the annual £100,000-plus a year in endorsements, or the five-figure appearance fees.

Still striving for his breakthrough as a decathlete, Ladejo has no sponsor and draws nothing from lottery funding. "He has debts but is happy. 'I am not claiming poverty,'" Ladejo said yesterday. "This is my choice and I love it. The decathlon has revived me."

In two years as a decathlete, Ladejo has made sound if unspectacular progress. He finished as the top Briton at the Commonwealth Games, in seventh, but is still more than 300 points short of 8,000, the benchmark of world class.

"Hopefully this year I will be able to put out some world-class performances in the decathlon," Ladejo said. So determined is he that, when he travels to Maebashi, Japan, for the 400 metres at the world indoor championships next week, he will maintain his training in other events.

Why then, is Ladejo back running 400s, albeit temporarily? "I need the money," he said. "I would not be going to the world championships if there was no prize-money and no way would I be doing 400s. My focus is not so much on winning as on the \$50,000."

Victory in the six-nations international in Genoa today would earn Ladejo just \$1,000 but it all helps and he needs the race to sharpen for Maebashi. Even if he fails to finish in the prize-money in the individual race in Japan, the strength of the Britain relay team almost guarantees a deposit into his bank account.

**SHEEHAN on BRIDGE**

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT  
Luckily, as in golf, there are no pictures on the score-card at bridge. My antics on this hand from the 1998 Gold Cup final went unnoticed by the rest of the team when we only lost 1 IMP on the board.

**Dealer East**      N-S game      IMPs  
 ♠ KQ103  
 ♡ A875  
 ♢ 83  
 ♣ K65  
 ♠ A985  
 ♡ 9  
 ♢ Q10842  
 ♣ ♦ QJ  
 ♠ 84  
 ♡ Q10842  
 ♢ AJ  
 ♣ A1024

Contract: Four Hearts by South. Lead: ten of diamonds.

After East passed I opened One Heart, and my partner Howard Cohen put me into Four Hearts. After the diamond lead my chances were poor, though as it happens, I have no club loser if I guess that suit correctly. Also the spade situation is exceptionally favourable. If I lead twice towards the king-queen, West gives me three tricks in the suit if he rises with the ace, and if he ducks twice my spade loser disappears.

To cater for this spade holding I won East's queen of diamonds and played a spade. West (Terry Goldsmith) were in with the ace straight away. Had he continued diamonds there would have been no story, but he switched to the queen of clubs.

I won in hand, cashed the ace of hearts and took two spade tricks, discarding my diamond loser. When East (Gerald Soper) followed with the jack of spades on the

**WORD-WATCHING**

By Philip Howard

**HEDERICERENT**  
a. A female regent  
b. Cantankerous  
c. Wearing ivy

**JALAP**  
a. A Japanese/Laplander  
b. A thick enamel  
c. A purgative

TENNIS: CZECH DENOUNCES RUSEDSKI FOR COMMENTS ON HIS POSITIVE STEROID TEST

**Drug issue continues to hound Korda**

By JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

A DIFFERENT sort of welcome awaited Petr Korda when he played at the Guardian Direct Cup 12 months ago. The Czech player arrived in London fresh from winning the Australian Open, his first grand-slam title, and hot on the trail of Pete Sampras's place at the top of the game.

Now Korda languishes at No 75 in the world rankings. The positive drugs test he submitted at Wimbledon seven months ago has besmirched his reputation. He is deep into the twilight of his career and his game is in tatters.

After escaping a ban when traces of nandrolone, an anabolic steroid, was found in his urine, Korda, 31, spoke of postponing his retirement to clear his name and finish with a flourish. There is no hint, no suggestion at all that he might recapture his former glories. He remains a slightly isolated figure, his furrowed features telling of a man on whose shoulders the doping problem has rested heavily. It has certainly hijacked his form post-Wimbledon — as evidenced by a string of first-round losses.

Korda's words added spice to his possible second-round encounter with Rusedski, who opened his campaign last night against Gianluca Pozzi, of Italy. More relaxed in his mind was Thomas Johansson, who registered a victory over Petr Luxa, a qualifier from the Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-4.

Johansson, seeded No 8, will remember his win over an opponent ranked No 22 for one reason. It was the Swede's first of the year after first-round exits in Doha, Sydney and Melbourne. Still, it is not a bad life: Johansson earned \$21,000 (around £13,000) for losing those matches.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, for one, will have welcomed Johansson's reviving fortunes. He must beat the Swede in their projected quarter-final on Friday, thereby earning valuable bonus ranking points, to wrest the No 1 spot from Sampras. Anything less and the Russian will be obliged to progress to the final.

Cedric Pioline, the beaten finalist last year, collapsed at the first hurdle this time against the enigmatic Nicolas Kiefer, of Germany. In succumbing over three sets in the quarter-finals in Rotterdam last week, Pioline lost both the tie-breaks he played against Rusedski. A similar fate befell him here as Kiefer rallied from the Frenchman 5-7, 6-2, 7-5 after just over 2½ hours.

Hermann, who opens tomorrow against one Slovakian in Jan Kroselak, learnt yesterday that victory would pitch him against another in Dominik Hrbaty, who bettered Stefano Pescosolido. Hrbaty prevailed 6-3, 6-7, 6-2 in another lengthy encounter.

A sombre mood governed events yesterday after the death of Menno Oosting, of Holland. The player was killed in a car crash when

returning home from a challenger event in France on Monday night. Several players observed a minute's silence on the court. Among them were two of his compatriots: Paul Haarhuis, who spoke eloquently of Oosting, and Rickard Kraijer, who was moved to tears.

**LINKS**

WEBSITE: [www.atptour.com](http://www.atptour.com)  
TELEVISION: BBC2, 2.10 (highlights)



Korda serves during his win over Wayne Ferreira in Battersea Park, London, yesterday

**KEENE on CHESS**

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

**Joint lead**

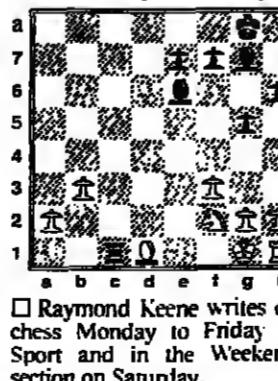
After two rounds of the elite tournament in Linares, Spain, two players share the lead: Garry Kasparov, the world champion, who scored a rare win as black against Ivanchuk, and Michael Adams, of Great Britain.

White: Vassily Ivanchuk  
Black: Garry Kasparov

Linares 1999

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5  
2 Nf3 d5  
3 d4 cxd4  
4 Nxd4 Nf6  
5 Nc3 a6  
6 Be3 Ng4  
7 Bg5 h6  
8 Bf4 g5  
9 Bg3 Bg7  
10 Qd2 Nc6  
11 Ne3 Ng5  
12 g3 b5  
13 Bf2 Rb8  
14 Nd4 d4  
15 Nd1 Nc4  
16 Bxd4 d5  
17 exd5 Qc5  
18 c3 Qd6  
19 Qe2 Rb7  
20 Qg3 b7  
21 Nf2 bxc3  
22 Be3 Qe8  
23 Kf1 Rb5  
24 Qe7  
25 Re3 exd4  
26 Nxd4 Nxe4  
27 Nxe4 Rxe4  
28 Qe4 Bxg5  
29 Qe7 Rb7  
30 Rb1 Qf6  
31 Rb2 Qf7  
32 Rb1 Qf7  
33 Rb2 Qf7  
34 Rb1 Qf7  
35 Rb2 Qf7  
36 Rb1 Qf7  
37 Rb2 Qf7  
38 Rb3 Qf6  
39 Rb8 Rb8  
40 Rb2 Qf7  
41 Kf2 Draw

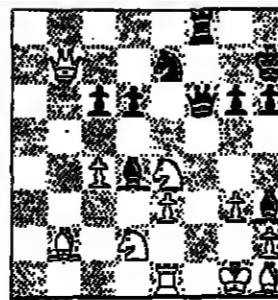
**Diagram of final position of the Kasparov victory**

□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

**WINNING MOVE**

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Mayer — Nakamura, Washington 1998. How did Black make the most of his powerful pair of bishops?



Solution on page 46

**Brotherhood of beauty and the beast**

SIMON BARNES

**Midweek View**

What do you have to do to get sent off in a rugby union match?

We debated this question after the England v Scotland match with precisely that degree of seriousness that we feel is expected of sportswriters of our calibre. How about if you mowed down the entire opposition pack with an Uzi?

Nah. You'd get a pretty serious talking-to, mind you. A real finger-wagging. You! No 4, white! You know perfectly well you're not supposed to use that gun on full automatic. Next time, keep it to single shots, all right? Or I might have to give you a yellow card.

Actually, I have changed my mind about Martin Johnson. I said on Monday that he was a Cro-Magnon; further research makes it clear he is a dead ringer for the *Homo erectus* skull found east of Lake Turkana in 1972. The extraordinary development of the brow-ridge makes diagnosis certain.

Johnson is, I read, a big man in many ways. Mainly, it must be said, in terms of size. In demeanour he reminds me of Spiny Norman, the giant hedgehog in *Monty Python* who stalked the streets of London as the nemesis of Dinsdale Piranha. You can just see Johnson walking heavy-footed across the Twickenham turf, bashing out the terrible words: "Dinsdale! Dins-dale!"

Dinsdale Piranha's main form of retribution was nailng people's heads to the floor. "I wanted him to do it, like, because I'd transgressed the unwritten law." *The Times* on Monday had a nice picture of Johnson nailing John Leslie's head to the floor. He used his left boot to do so — I do love a forward, who is genuinely two-footed, don't you? All his weight was in the air, and down he came. Look out, larynx.

Now stamping on a chap's larynx can be as lethal as snapping off half a magazine from an Uzi. And the referee was so shocked and appalled that he felt that a mere talking-to was not enough. And so he took extreme measures: a yellow card.

And this means that Johnson can't actually be punished further. This seems illogical, considering that a yellow card is not so much a punishment as a warning, but there you go. A yellow card closes the matter.

Just as Johnson stalks the field in the guise of *Homo erectus*, so beings of the more recent past stalk through every corner of rugby union. The roiling spirit is, as ever, what's-it-got-do-with-you? Boys will be boys, let's all kick the crap out of each other and it's all right

in football you get a yellow card for looking cross and you get sent off for sneezing. The game has swung the other way. Perhaps all games performed in public in front of paying spectators must do so.

But rugby remains in thrall to the notion of secrecy and the ruck is at the heart of it all, for that matter at the very heart of rugby. And, even if the will to police the ruck exists, I doubt very much if policing it is a practical prospect. Rugby can't live without it. There will be many more of these cases of stamping, stud-raking, punching and ear-biting.

It is simply a very violent game. That is its beauty, and its curse. Even if a genuine will to control the illegal part of that violence existed — and it does not — then rugby's officials would be forever running up the down escalator... with Spiny Norman rushing down to meet them, teeth bared. Dinsdale!

**SPORT IN BRIEF**

■ CRICKET: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) emphasised yesterday its intention that the World Cup in England this summer should be a carnival, family affair with no bans on fancy dress or musical instruments inside grounds. It hopes to attract more women to the competition.

The ECB is seeking assurances before the RLIF meeting in Sydney next month, otherwise the game's international reputation will be damaged.

The light-board has been a feature of the Australian game for a couple of seasons, while the video screen, pioneered in coverage of live Super League matches on BSkyB in 1996, has become an accepted, if expensive, means of judging contentious scoring decisions.

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is anxious to learn more about reports from Australia that have cast doubt on the tri-nations series between Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand in October and November.

Problems with forward planning and the shelving of a

medical advice. Nerurkar, of Britain, fifth in the 1997 event, said: "I've struggled to find my best form in training and competition and, following a series of medical tests I've had over the past three weeks, I have been advised to take an extended period of quiet training."

■ HOCKEY: Mike Corby, who has made 59 appearances for England and 32 for Great Britain, has been nominated by the Middlesbrough Hockey Association to stand for the position of vice-president of the English Hockey Association at the forthcoming annual general meeting. He is at present vice-president of the English Squash Rackets Association and the world federation.

**SPORTS POLITICS: GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE NEW NETWORK FOR TRAINING****Regional centres to groom our talent**

By JOHN GOODBODY

JOHN MAJOR'S vision of Britain having a £160 million Academy of Sport to groom stars is finally over. The Government will announce on Monday that there will be a network of ten regional centres in England, with Sheffield, once picked as its hub, now downgraded to becoming just one of these facilities for training.

Instead of being the glittering centrepiece for reviving Britain's sporting prestige, only a handful of sports will be using the proposed site in

the Lower Don Valley. However, Sheffield will still house the centre for sports science, medicine and research. The original plan, announced four years ago by the former Prime Minister, included an academy offering residential places for 500 young people, who would improve their sporting ability while pursuing academic subjects.

The scheme will please most national governing bodies, which originally

opposed Major's plans for a UK Sports Institute (UKSI) but had to wait until after the change of government in 1997 to be heard.

David Sparks, the chief executive of the Amateur Swimming Association, said yesterday: "We have got what sport wanted — a series of network regional sites. But we have wasted at least two years in getting there." Some sports, such as football and cricket, want their own specialist national facilities and the sports medicine and research centre.



# Gay drama that's all mouth and no trousers

**U**nlike, say, Texas, which has no homosexuals — not still alive at any rate — Manchester has a thriving gay community around Canal Street, an area where community spirit manifests itself not by the locals regularly popping into each other's houses for a bowl of sugar but by the locals regularly popping into each other. For those of you who don't get out much, Channel 4 brought the mountain to Muhammad last night when it finally dragged its noisy new drama, *Queer As Folk*, out of the closet. So did you find the experience more enjoyable than you'd been expecting? Fancy coming back for more of the same next week?

There's no getting round the homosexuality. Treating *Queer As Folk* as just another TV drama, which just happens to feature gays — is like pretending Cyrano de Bergerac is like any other bloke, though, now you mention it, he

does seem to have the most whapping nose; it's funny that I didn't notice it before.

Cyrano is half man, half noise. But what makes him captivating is that he's a romantic, shy, poetic, love-struck, selfless, tragic man who is trapped by other people's obsessions with his hoover. People can't pass his nose, literally or figuratively. It's not that he wants people to act as if he doesn't have a nose, as big as *Apollo 13*, but he does want people to see beyond it. So, if we look beyond the gayness in *Queer As Folk*, is there anything more complex there? Or is it about the way *Emmanuelle* is about sex — that is, if Sylvia Kristel didn't get her kit off every four minutes you'd just as soon go to bed and read *Investors' Chronicle*.

I think there probably is more, but *Queer As Folk* is trying so hard to taunt primmer viewers into being affronted that it's in danger of making the rest of us

slightly bored while it gets its bravado out of its system. At times it was like listening to a precocious child who thinks he's impressing the world by using needlessly long words, most of which he manages to mispronounce slightly, thereby fraying the effect a bit.

**T**he whole thing moves along at a zippy pace (unzippy too, obviously). It is sharply written, by Russell T Davies, it's madly glossy (Manchester's gay life in lots so spacious you could play the FA Cup Final in them). And — like *Sex and the City* — other series which Channel 4 has been trying desperately hard to have lambasted by an outraged press, and which was set to an improbably glossy world — it is well acted: Aidan Gillen, the rich, handsome, 29-year-old around whom the action (and half of Manchester's gay community) revolves, carries his air of smug,

## REVIEW

Joe Joseph

self-satisfied rapture so well that orgasms seem superfluous. Charles McDowell's direction is so fast you need to hail a cab to keep up.

But so far, it's slightly unengaging. If *Queer As Folk* didn't have the novelty of gay sex, would anyone have made the same fuss about it? Or got excited about it in a positive way, rather than just because they were

outraged by its depiction of under-age man-boy sex? It has a certain cynicism that could just be a stab at chic metropolitan knowingness, but you can imagine it leaving a nasty taste in many viewers' mouths.

Brighton, of course, used to be the place that queers, peers and racketeers. Now it has Julie Burchill. "It is a horrible thing to say," she told *Young in Close Up: Who Does Julie Burchill Think She Is?* (BBC2), "but if she'd been killed in a car crash, about five years ago, that would have been perfect. It's as though Elvis, or Marilyn Monroe, or John Lennon hadn't died, and they'd hung around and they'd become these awful parodies of themselves." Can you tell that Toby and Julie had a small falling-out?

Burchill calls herself a "one-trick pony, but I do it quite well", and Nikki Hinman and Simon Chua's lively documentary seemed to be

wondering if this 39-year-old pony was now fit only for the knacker's yard. Young — whom Burchill wanted to replace as editor of *Modern Review* (the magazine she mostly financed) with a young girl with whom she had fallen in love — was the loudest voice for the prosecution.

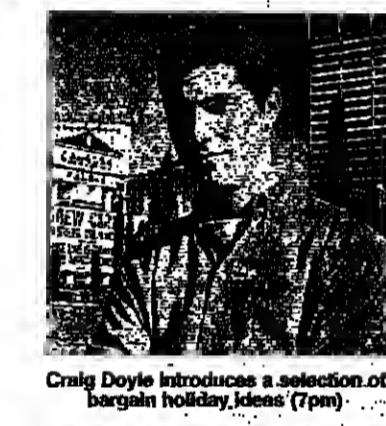
**M**ost of the other witnesses seemed to feel that even if the pony wasn't quite as frisky in print as she was in her heyday, she can still kick like a mule in a way that poorer columnists can't. And with Burchill you're never sure when her next heyday might be. Her career hasn't traced a conventional rise-and-fall trajectory. It has moved, rather, like the bouncing bomb: every time you think it might be going under, it leaps upwards for another bounce. As she pointed out, there are so many Burchill wannabes out there that

every now and then an editor turns up who thinks, why not pay a little more and hire the real thing? Her shamelessness, fearlessness, honesty, and her pathological need to shock, along with her unshakeable self-belief, could produce an unpalatable cocktail, but her skill is that she has made them work: often dazzlingly.

**Workers At War** (BBC1) showed what happens when the staff want more serious revenge than verbal feuding. *Toby Young* took his revenge against Burchill by closing down her magazine. To feature in last night's *Workers At War* he'd had to burn down her house, too. Here were people — angry at being sacked, or not hired, or unpaid — who didn't know where to draw the line when they got mad. It's usually best to forgive and forget. But it's true that it's much easier to forgive once you've got even.

## BBC1

6.00am **Business Breakfast** (83076)  
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (12415)  
9.00 **Kilroy** (T) (6569453)  
9.45 **The Vanessa Show** (T) (695328)  
10.55 **News: Weather** (T) (150582)  
11.00 **Change That** (T) (777569)  
11.25 **Can't Cook, Won't Cook** (T) (6147328)  
11.55 **News: Weather** (T) (1320415)  
12.00pm **Call My Bluff** (30714)  
12.30 **Wipeout** (5596427)  
12.55 **The Weather Show** (T) (4883279)  
1.00 **One O'Clock News** (T) (15052)  
1.30 **Regional News: Weather** (T) (515347)  
1.40 **Neighbours** Mike moves into Ramsay Street (T) (2594502)  
2.05 **Inordinate Mark** celebrates his graduation, and makes a career choice (T) (354163)  
2.55 **Through the Keyhole** (T) (5951433)  
3.25 **Children's BBC: Playdays** (671812)  
3.45 **Little Monsters** (2693786) 3.50  
Chucklevision (5427298) 4.10 **It's a Knockout** (T) (5580347) 5.00 **Newround** (2020415)  
5.10 **Blue Peter** (6672057)  
5.35 **Neighbours** (T) (T) (535618)  
6.00 **Two O'Clock News: Weather** (T) (279)  
6.30 **Regional News Magazine** (231)



Craig Doyle introduces a selection of bargain holiday ideas (7pm)

7.00 **Holiday on a Shoestring** New series. Craig Doyle presents the best in bargain holidays (1/6) (T) (4326)  
7.30 **Tomorrow's World** New presenter design for crash helmets (T) (415)  
8.00 **Changing Rooms** Two Knebworth homes are made over (T) (3076)  
8.30 **Comic Relief Jukebox** (T) (293250)  
8.50 **The National Lottery: Amazing Luck Stories** (T) (195279)  
9.00 **Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather** (T) (6237)  
9.29 **National Lottery Update** (69705)  
9.30 **Playbox** Jasper Carroll Back to the Front New series. The Brummie comedian celebrates 30 years in showbusiness (1/6) (T) (45182)  
10.00 **The X Files** A priest enlists the agents' help when a young disabled girl's body is found (T) (78637)  
10.45 **Ruby Wax Meets Goldie Hawn Ruby** interviews the Hollywood star (T) (213637)  
11.15 **Black and White** (3/3) (T) (50559)  
**Film** Beauty of Beauty (1991) A woman whose beauty-queen sister has been abducted sets out to trap the sadistic kidnapper (T) (756142)  
1.25am **Weather** (T) (512945)  
1.30 **BBC News 24** (8707125)

10.45 **The State** (T) (213637) 11.15 **Ruby Wax Meets Goldie Hawn** (T) (202250) 11.45 **Black and White** (3/3) (T) (5052873) 12.20am **Film:** Victim of Beauty (T) (997514) 1.55 **News** (T) (8204458) 2.00-6.00 **BBC News 24** (5690993)

## BBC2

7.00am **Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Tales of the Tooth Fairies** 7.05 **Teletubbies** 7.30 **Snacks** 7.50 **The Really Wild Show** 8.15 **Rewind** 8.25 **Tea-Mania** 8.40 **Pooh's Dot Shorts** 8.50 **Tales of the Tooth Fairies** 9.00 **Environment** 8.10 **What? Where? When?** 9.25 **The Art** 9.45 **Words and Pictures** 10.30 **Numberplate** 10.45 **Cats' Eyes** 11.00 **Around Scotland** 11.20 **The Geography Programme** 11.40 **Science in Action** 12.00pm **TV Show** 12.15 **Halo aus Berlin** 12.30 **Working Lunch** 1.00 **Brunn** 1.10 **The Travel Hour** (T) (5623331)  
2.10 **International Tennis** The Guardian Direct Cup First-round highlights from Bittersea Hall (6179540)  
2.40 **News: Weather** (T) (348616)  
2.45 **Westminster** Political news (2845144)  
3.55 **News: Weather** (T) (6893076)  
4.00 **Keye** (6399453)  
4.25 **Ready, Steady, Cook** (T) (592540)  
4.55 **Esther Car-lovers** (T) (2813908)  
5.25 **Today's the Day** (T) (591182)  
5.50 **LifeLine** **Woman on Want** (T) (534270)  
6.00 **Star Trek: The Next Generation** Tro's mother decides to get married (37708)  
6.40 **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** Willow is possessed by an evil spirit (T) (243786)  
7.25 **Five Go Mad in the Kitchen** (T) (2693927)  
7.30 **Sophie Grigson's Herbs Sage and Onion stuffing** (T) (847)  
9.00 **The House Detectives** Juliet Morris and the team provide a glimpse into the history of a Cumbria chemist (T) (1618)  
9.00 **WALES: Rick Stein's Seafood Odyssey** (9/8) (T) (1618)  
9.30 **Looking Good** with Lorn Turner (3453)  
9.00 **CHINe** **Modern Times: Bookies** Never Lose A Film following the independent on-course bookie Barry Dennis (T) (541521)



Steve Pateyman presents a radical plan to save his business (9.30pm)

9.50 **CHINe** **Trouble at the Top** New series. A lailing family shoe business gambles on cornering a market in kinky boots for men (1/6) (T) (313705)  
10.28 **Video Nation Shorts** (27863)  
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) (533182)  
11.15 **Comedy National Experimental sketches**, with Ricky Grover (20182)  
11.45 **10x10 Beirut** Residents remember their city as it was before the war (T) (358540)  
11.55 **Weather** (T) (535144)  
12.00pm **Despatch Box** (76954)  
12.30 **BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Home and Away** 1.00 **Locking Glass World** 1.30 **Our Invisible Sun** 2.00 **Schools: Special Needs — Landmarks: The Caribbean and Coping with the Climate** 4.00 **Languages: Italianissimo** 13-16 **5.00 Business and Training: RCN Nursing Updates** — Clinical Effectiveness: What's the Evidence? 5.45 **Open University: The Sunbathers** 6.10 **Therapies on Trial** 6.35 **Health and Disease in Zimbabwe**

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**RACING 43**

Favourite for 1,000  
Guineas sustains  
fatal injury on gallops

**SPORT**

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 1999

**GOLF 46**

World's finest gather  
in California for  
ultimate test of skill

**Old guard comes under heavy fire**

# Baron seeks to drive RFU forward

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

**FRANCIS BARON**, the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) chief executive for no more than five months, delivered a scathing critique yesterday of the ills that have cost the RFU so much in financial and moral terms. "If this were a pic," Baron said, "heads would have rolled long ago."

It is Baron's brief to make the RFU the "financial powerhouse" of rugby in the British Isles within the next three years. To do so, he must drag it out of the morass of bureaucracy and debt that has accumulated over the past four years and restore the authority that once came naturally to the country that founded the game but whose popularity in world terms has never been lower.

He painted a bleak picture, when he joined last October, of demoralised staff embracing a "culture of resignation", of a lack of responsibility and accountability or of any formal business plans, of regular reports from the union's different areas within a governing body including 56 committees generating a "mountain of paperwork".

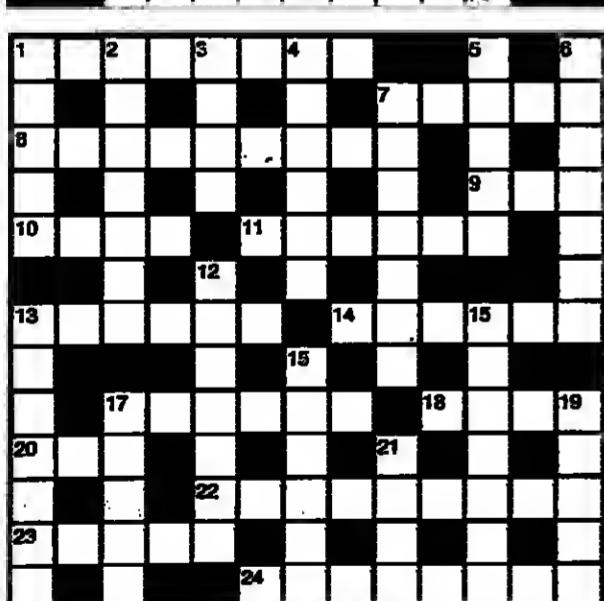
Although the union has budgeted for a £1.4 million loss in the present financial year, Baron estimates that it will be more like £2.3 million, given legal costs and the poor financial return from England's World Cup qualifying games at Huddersfield. Budge Rogers, the RFU junior vice-president who has produced a report on the future structure of the union, was equally sombre.

"I was appalled, returning to the game after a long time away, by what had gone on in the RFU Council," Rogers said. "Discussion of minutiae by over 50 people, not just at one meeting but at the next



Baron: bleak picture

**TIMES TWO CROSSWORD**  
Simon Barnes, page 45



No 1649

**ACROSS**  
1 Killing the king (8)  
7 A snap (5)  
8 Future generations (9)  
9 Droop (3)  
10 Fight of honour (4)  
11 Withdraw (heresy) (6)  
13 London suburbs; type of comedy (6)  
14 A reflector (6)  
15 Elaborately decorated (6)  
18 Rough edge: West Country word (4)  
20 Swindler; pain; college servant (3)  
22 Government admin (street) (9)  
23 Make straight (5)  
24 Keep in mind (8)

**SOLUTION TO NO 1648**  
**ACROSS:** 1 Hesworth 5 Hope 7 Recurrently 8 Spain 9 Extant 10 Entomb 13 Hag 14 Derive 17 Obsist 18 Hare 19 Megalomania 20 New 21 Kingship 22 Make straight 23 Hesworth 24 Keep in mind

## Tottenham looking to extend cup sequence

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

WHEN George Graham is happy, he exudes a warm glow and a smile bordering on smugness. Graham, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, is smiling a lot at the moment and has every right to as he leads his side into their FA Cup fifth-round replay against Leeds United, his former club, at White Hart Lane tonight.

Since Graham left Elland Road in October, he has revitalised a team that was drifting nowhere under the apparently haphazard guidance of Christian Gross. Not so much in the FA Carling Premiership, in which a series of draws have restricted their progress, but in the knockout competitions, in which they have not lost in 11 matches this season.

United deny making offer for Rivaldo

MANCHESTER UNITED yesterday denied that they had made an offer for Rivaldo, the Barcelona forward, even though the player claimed that he had rejected advances from the club.

United were reported to have launched an £18 million bid for the Brazil international. However, a United spokesman said: "There is no truth in this – it is nonsense."

Josep Maria Minguela, Rivaldo's agent, provided details of the supposed offer, which would mean United having to pay up to £6 million to release Rivaldo from his contract at Barcelona.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, is an admirer of

things to be done, a lot of things to achieve, and time is the only answer when you're building something. The players have been fantastic. They had a really hard programme and their mental attitude has been good. But I still need a bigger and more talented squad."

Tottenham have played 13 league and cup matches since Christmas, none of which they have lost. Leeds have been on the go, playing only one game fewer over the same period, and have held up remarkably well, considering the number of injuries that David O'Leary, the manager, has had to contend with. O'Leary's younger players have filled the gaps admirably and will have learned much from their experiences.

Lucas Radebe, the Leeds central defender, embarks on an exhausting schedule of three games in six days this evening. South Africa have given him permission to play at White Hart Lane but he must leave after the game and fly to Johannesburg, where he will play against Gabon in the African Nations' Cup on Saturday.

Liverpool moved swiftly yesterday to end speculation suggesting that Michael Owen had reached an agreement with Lazio that, if he decided to leave Anfield, the Rome club would have the option of first talks. "Michael has assured us that he has not made any agreement with any club to talk to them now or in the future," Ian Cotton, a Liverpool spokesman, said.

"It's part of my life, you have to get on with it. After it's over, I hope I'll look back on it and be proud of what I've done."

Ronaldo struggles, page 44  
Rovers dig deep, page 44

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